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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Initial reports submitted by States parties under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant

Addendum

MAURITIUS

[24 August 1994]

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I. GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT

Article 1

In what manner has the right to self-determination been implemented?

1. Mauritius was a British colony from 1810 to 1968. On 12 March 1968, it became an independent, sovereign State within the Commonwealth with the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Head of the Commonwealth, as Head of State. On 12 March 1992, Mauritius acceded to the status of a Republic, with a Mauritian President as Head of State.

2. When Mauritius achieved independence in 1968 its territory comprised the Island of Rodrigues, Agelega Island and the Cargados Carajos Islands, mainly St. Brandon.

3. It should be recalled that at the Constitutional Conference held in London in 1965 between the Colonial Office and political representatives of Mauritius, the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, was excised from the territory of Mauritius.

4. For record purposes, it should also be noted that in United Nations General Assembly resolution 2066 (XX), adopted on 16 December 1965, the administering Power was, inter alia, invited to take no action that would dismember the Territory of Mauritius and violate its territorial integrity. Mauritius has consistently claimed its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

5. Mauritius has since some time now established an ongoing and meaningful dialogue with the United Kingdom on the issue of Diego Garcia which, it is hoped, will lead to an early and satisfactory settlement of the matter. A number of confidence-building measures have been undertaken in this respect, amongst which was the establishment of the British-Mauritian Fisheries Commission, which aims at promoting, facilitating and coordinating conservation and scientific research in Chagos waters. It also underscores the commitment of both sides to keep the inland and marine environment of the Chagos Archipelago in pristine condition when it is handed back to Mauritius. Another confidence-building measure was the visit to Diego Garcia in May 1994 by a delegation led by the Minister of External Affairs of Mauritius.

6. The Constitution of Mauritius is the supreme law of the country. It recognizes that there should exist without discrimination by reason of race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the right of others and for the public interest, the right to life, liberty, security of the person and to protection under the law, freedom of conscience, of expression, of assembly, and association and freedom to establish schools, the right to individual protection for the privacy of one's home, and other property and from the deprivation of property without compensation.

7. The Constitution safeguards the preservation of democratic government as it is founded on the fundamental principle of separation of the powers of the executive, the legislature and the judicature. It is mandatory, under the

Constitution, to hold elections every five years. The legislature consists of a National Assembly comprising 62 elected members. Every Mauritian citizen having reached the age of 18 is eligible to vote in general elections. For electoral purposes, the country is divided into 21 constituencies including Rodrigues, an island forming part of Mauritius. Each constituency is represented by three elected members, except for Rodrigues which has two members. The Prime Minister and the Ministers forming part of the Cabinet have to be elected members.

8. In addition to the General Elections, elections are held at the local level every five years to elect members of the municipal councils of the five towns and of 126 village councils and four district councils.

9. Self-determination has been enhanced by the pursuit of an independent foreign policy characterized by the straightforward approach of Mauritius on issues relating to the human right to democracy. Mauritius has availed itself of the assistance of friendly countries and various United Nations agencies to develop its capacity to achieve greater self-determination.

Article 2

Paragraph 1 of the guidelines

10. Non-nationals are subject to the laws of the country and, while they are in the Mauritian territory, they are entitled to the rights and fundamental freedoms provided for in the Constitution of the country.

Paragraph 3 of the guidelines

Multilateral donors

11. On the multilateral front, the main financial agencies which extended assistance to Mauritius in the 1980s are the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Other multilateral organizations, like the European Development Fund (EDF), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the African Development Bank (ADB), the Arab Bank of Economic Development in Africa, and the OPEC Fund, have contributed substantial amounts of concessionary finance to sustain the development efforts of the country.

12. The United Nations system has also supported Mauritius in various ways during the last two decades. Grant resources from the United Nations system, though small in relative terms, have made a significant contribution towards the progress made in several sectors of the economy. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) funds have been used for the financing of activities such as feasibility studies and have thus played a catalytic role in the realization of major development projects. UNDP has contributed to strengthening the institutional capacity of the country through the provision of long- and short-term cooperation officers, the supply of equipment and the training of nationals locally and overseas. Apart from assistance under the UNDP country programme, Mauritius has benefited from the resources of several other United Nations bodies, the major ones being the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Bilateral donors

13. Presently, Mauritius is receiving assistance from several member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (including France, the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Japan, Germany and Canada), oil exporting Arab countries as well. Mauritius receives assistance from these countries either under a basic agreement on economic cooperation which allows a planned approach to aid flows, or under their regular aid programmes offering annual allocations.

14. France ranks among the most important donors of the OECD countries for Mauritius in the 1980s if one takes into account loans from the "Caisse Centrale de Cooperation Economique" and grant aid through "Fonds d'Aide et de Cooperation" taken together. The United Kingdom is a traditional donor of technical assistance. From the mid-1980s, the Commonwealth Development Corporation has been providing loan financing for projects in the public and private sectors. Australia has provided an average annual grant assistance of about Rs 55 million under its various aid programmes during 1987-1990, while Japan and the United States have extended grant aid equivalent to Rs 250 million and Rs 160 million respectively for the same period.

Developing countries

15. Among the developing countries, India and China are the major bilateral aid donors. The assistance provided by these countries has helped particularly in the development of infrastructure and in the social, cultural, scientific and sports fields. Although these developing countries are recipients of aid themselves, their contribution to the economic and social development of Mauritius is indeed remarkable and is a concrete testimony of South-South cooperation.

Joint commissions

16. With a view to seeking foreign aid, the Government strengthened its cooperation with developed as well as developing countries that were willing to assist Mauritius in its development efforts. While with some of the bilateral donor countries Mauritius has a traditional working arrangement based on historical or trading relations, with others it has signed a formal basic agreement designed to promote economic, technical, scientific and cultural cooperation between the signatories. The agreement provides invariably for the setting up of a joint commission. Thus, Mauritius has a functioning joint commission arrangement with France, India and China.

17. The joint commission, which meets alternately every two years in Mauritius and in the other, donor country, allows for regular and formal consultations between representatives of the two sides. These consultations give an opportunity to the two sides to identify and agree on areas of cooperation. For Mauritius, the joint commission arrangement has proved to be an effective mechanism to mobilize foreign resources, which are used in accordance with the priorities of the developing strategy of the recipient, aimed at the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights.

II. SPECIFIC RIGHTS

Article 6

Paragraph 1 of the guidelines

18. Mauritius acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination on 29 June 1972.

19. Mauritius acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1984 and a report was submitted in 1992.

Paragraphs 2 and 3 of the guidelines

20. The workforce in large establishments between 1982 and 1993 was as follows:

1982	180 341
1988	264 009
1993	285 570

21. The number of registered unemployed in the same period was as follows:

Unemployment	Men	Women	Young persons	Disabled persons
Dec. 1982	49 875	20 938	4 316	Not available
Dec. 1988	15 551	7 403	480	508
Dec. 1993	2 612	4 495	144	295

22. Job opportunities tend to favour female workers. Out of a workforce of 84,000, 70 per cent were female and 48 per cent were employed in the Export Processing Zone (EPZ).

23. As far as disabled workers are concerned, a trust fund for disabled persons is responsible for placing such persons in suitable jobs.

24. The Constitution guarantees the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, including freedom of choice of employment. Labour legislation ensures that conditions of employment in no way infringe upon the fundamental, political and economic freedoms of the individual.

25. The Constitution provides equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation for nationals of Mauritius. However, in accordance with the Employment (Non-Citizens) Restrictions Act 1970, a migrant worker who is issued with a work permit has no right to take up alternative employment without the prior approval of the Government. Members of his family are not allowed to take up employment in the country.

26. As far as vocational guidance and training of persons is concerned, the Careers Guidance Service, attached to the Ministry of Education, prepares students for the world of work.

27. On the other hand, one of the objectives of the Employment Service in Mauritius is to advise school leavers and all job seekers on employment possibilities and registration; they are also helped in their occupational choices and to increase their chances of being employed, thus allowing them to have a more reasonable approach towards their choice of a job.

Paragraph 4 of the guidelines

28. Figures are not available as to the proportion of the working population holding more than one full-time job in order to secure an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families.

Paragraph 6 of the guidelines

29. As the economic situation of the country has improved with the assistance of the international community at large, there has been a concurrent increase in the number and quality of jobs/occupations available to the workforce in Mauritius.

Article 7

Paragraph 1 of the guidelines

30. Mauritius has ratified the Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921 (No. 14) and the Labour Inspection Convention 1947 (No. 81).

Paragraph 2 (a) of the guidelines

31. As a signatory of the Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention, 1928 (No. 26) and the Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery (Agriculture) Convention, 1951 (No. 99), the Government of Mauritius has established a permanent wage-fixing machinery, the National Remuneration Board, which recommends wages and conditions of employment for gainfully employed persons in the private sector.

32. Wages and conditions of work in banks, insurance companies and for staff of well-established corporate enterprises are determined by collective agreements or on an individual basis.

33. The Permanent Arbitration Tribunal, established under the Industrial Relations Act, whilst adjudicating in a dispute referred to it, also fixes wages for the workers involved in the dispute. The Government has also instituted a Pay Research Bureau on a permanent basis to determine wages and conditions of employment for the public service and parastatal bodies.

Paragraph 2 (b) of the guidelines

34. Under section 94 (1) of the Industrial Relations Act, the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations may refer a matter to the National Remuneration Board when he is of the opinion that it is expedient to fix

a minimum remuneration in respect of any category of employees. A joint consultative or negotiating body composed of representatives of a substantial number of employees and of employers in an industry may request the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations to refer any matter concerning minimum remuneration in that industry to the National Remuneration Board.

35. At present the following sectors of economic activity are covered by the minimum wage-fixing machinery:

Sectors of economic activity	No. of workers involved (large establishments employing more than 10 workers)
Livestock breeding	1 358
Attorneys' and notaries clerks	400
Baking industry	2 100
Blockmaking, stone crushing and other related industries	1 800
Catering industry	11 000
Cinema workers	FNA a/
Construction industry	30 000
Distributive trades	37 000
Electrical, engineering and mechanical workshops	1 300
Export enterprises	83 900
Factory workers (Non-EPZ)	18 287
Field crops and orchard workers	9 700
Household workers	FNA a/
Light metal and wooden furniture workshops	9 600
Messengers	5 300
Newspapers and periodicals workers (including printing)	550
Nursing homes	569
Printing industry	1 700
Private secondary schools	2 944
Road haulage industry	5 200

Public transport (buses)	6 500
Salt manufacturing industry	200
Security guards	2 600
Sugar industry	46 500
Tailoring trade	FNA a/
Tea industry	2 623

a/ Figures not available.

Almost 90 per cent of employees in the private sector are covered by the minimum wage-fixing machinery.

36. The sectors not covered either by legislation (Remuneration Orders), collective agreements or an award of the Permanent Arbitration Tribunal do not form a homogeneous group and the number of employees in each sector is generally quite low.

Paragraph 2 (b) (i) of the guidelines

37. The minimum wages have the force of law only after the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations, by regulations, makes Remuneration Orders implementing the recommendations of the National Remuneration Board (NRB). Minimum wages are adjusted annually with a view to compensating employees for an increase in the cost of living.

Paragraph 2 (b) (ii) of the guidelines

38. In determining minimum wages the NRB, inter alia, takes into consideration the following factors:

(a) The interests of the persons immediately concerned and the community as a whole;

(b) The need to ensure the continued ability of the Government to finance development programmes and recurrent expenditure in the public sector;

(c) The need to increase the rate of economic growth and provide greater employment opportunities;

(d) The need to develop schemes for payment by results, and as far as possible to relate increased remuneration to increased labour productivity;

(e) The need to prevent gains in wages of employees from being adversely affected by price increases.

39. The NRB also takes into consideration the need of the worker to maintain his family effectively. The publication by public authorities of statistics on wages and other major economic and social indicators, budgetary measures and the National Development Plan setting out the social and economic policies of the Government also influence the NRB when setting the minimum wages to be paid.

Paragraph 2 (b) (iii) of the guidelines

40. A household budget survey is carried out at regular intervals of five years to study the expenditure pattern of the population with a view to updating the market basket of consumption goods and services used for the computation of the Consumer Price Index. National accounting is also undertaken to provide a comprehensive and detailed framework for the systematic and integrated recording of all transaction flows related to production, consumption and performance of different sectors of the economy.

Paragraph 2 (b) (iv) of the guidelines

41. Information on the development of average and minimum wages is contained in annex I*.

Paragraph 2 (b) (v) of the guidelines

42. Inspections by the Labour Inspectorate are carried out regularly at undertakings to ensure compliance with minimum wage provisions and other labour legislation. Reports of inspections reveal that a fair degree of compliance is observed, and in the case of non-compliance, recommendations are, in the first instance, issued to employers requesting them to comply with the provisions of the law. Where persuasion does not yield results within the delay afforded to employers to remedy the situation, the case is referred to the Industrial Court, which has the exclusive civil and criminal jurisdiction to hear any labour relations matter.

Paragraph 2 (c) of the guidelines

43. There does not exist any inequality in remuneration for work of equal value or infringement of the principle of equal pay for equal work. The minimum basic wage for female workers in the agricultural sector is different from that of their male counterparts as it takes account of the nature of the work performed by the female workers. Furthermore, female labourers are exempted from performing various field operations which, because of their strenuous nature, are exclusively performed by male workers. However, male and female workers on task work or piece rate work are remunerated at the same rate for certain field operations which they can both perform. For these operations they are paid at the same rate, either by weight or by measure.

44. In the public service, there is no discrimination either against lady public officers who have the same rights and privileges as their male counterparts. All officers appointed to a particular post draw salaries on

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* Available for consultation in the secretariat.

the same salary scale. On the other hand, lady officers do enjoy some additional privileges, such as retirement on marriage grounds at any age, and leave without pay to look after newborn babies.

Paragraph 2 (d) of the guidelines

45. Please refer to annex II*.

Paragraph 3 (a) of the guidelines

46. All legal and administrative provisions regarding health and safety matters are governed by the Occupational Safety, Health and Welfare Act 1988, which provides the mechanism for the control of unsafe working conditions and gives pre-eminence to the duty of employers to ensure safe working conditions and the safety, health and welfare at work of all employees. The Act is enforced by the Factory Inspectorate of the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations and it applies to any place of work where work is carried out by any person under a contract of employment and includes any vehicle or vessel, any installation on land and any offshore installation, and any moveable structure. No category of worker is excluded from the scope of existing safety and health legislation.

Paragraph 3 (b) of the guidelines

47. The number, nature and frequency of industrial accidents for the years 1989 to 1993 are provided in annex III*.

Paragraph 4 of the guidelines

48. Promotion in the public service is a matter for the Public Service Commission (PSC), which is a constitutional body under the Constitution operating within the parameters laid down in its regulations (PSC Regulations). The regulations which are made by the PSC under the Constitution ensure that appointment or promotion in the public service are made within the spirit of the Constitution, i.e. there is no discrimination in regard to sex, race, caste, place of origin, political opinions, colour or creed. Of course, in certain specific areas the requirements are restricted to either male or female candidates, depending on the nature of the duties required. For example in a girls college, the need will be for a female matron.

Paragraph 5 of the guidelines

49. The Labour Act provides that no worker should be bound to work more than six days in a week. Neither should the person work more than:

(i) Six hours in a day inclusive of the time allowed for meals and tea where the worker is a young person (aged between 15 and 18 years);

(ii) Eight hours in a day exclusive of the time allowed for meals and tea where the worker is above the age of 18 years.

50. Employees in the Export Processing Zone may, by virtue of the Export Enterprises (Remuneration Order) Regulations 1984, be required to perform extra hours of work for up to 10 hours per week. Furthermore, it is provided in the Regulations that no worker shall, except with his consent, be required to perform extra hours of work in excess of the 10 hours per week. The law also provides that an employer may not require a worker to perform extra hours of work unless he has given notice at least 24 hours in advance to the worker of the extra work to be performed and of its duration.

51. It is clear that all workers enjoy a reasonable daily rest. The law also provides a minimum uninterrupted daily rest of 11 hours for workers employed in an industrial undertaking and who have to work up to or beyond 10 p.m. The Industrial Expansion Act 1993 also guarantees a statutory uninterrupted break of 12 hours whenever a female employee is required to work between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. This aims at affording better protection to this category of workers.

52. All workers who have been at least 12 months in employment are entitled to paid public holidays and annual leave on full pay. Remuneration Orders governing specific sectors of the economy prescribe a varying quantum of annual leave which, in any event, is not less than the 16 days per year prescribed by the Labour Act for other categories of workers not covered by Remuneration Orders.

Paragraph 5 (a) of the guidelines

53. There has not been any difficulty in implementing provisions regarding rest days, reasonable limitation of working hours, periodic holidays with pay and remuneration for public holidays.

Paragraph 5 (b) of the guidelines

54. Employees in the private sector drawing in excess of Rs 72,000 per annum are not covered by the provisions of the Labour Act 1975, except for matters related to termination of employment. However, by custom and practice these employees are entitled to their weekly rest day which, as in the case of other workers, falls on a Sunday.

55. A copy of the Finance and Audit Regulations, published in 1991, is contained in annex IV*. These Regulations provide for an Employees Welfare Fund which has been set up specifically to attend to the leisure, recreational and welfare needs of employees.

Paragraph 7 of the guidelines

56. Training facilities are extended to our staff in the field of labour administration. Technical assistance was obtained for the drafting of the law relating to occupational safety, health and welfare. Technical support was also received for the setting up of the Labour Information Centre in 1992.

Article 8

Paragraph 1 of the guidelines

57. Mauritius acceded to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on 12 December 1973.

58. The Government of Mauritius has ratified the ILO Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

Paragraph 2 of the guidelines

59. The Industrial Relations Act 1973 sets down the following conditions for the joining and formation of a trade union:

(a) Every trade union shall, not later than three months after the date of its formation, apply to the Registrar of Associations for registration. It cannot claim or receive an admission fee, dues or contributions unless it has been registered. Failing to register the trade union within the prescribed time limit can result in its winding up by the Registrar of Association.

(b) No person is eligible to be a member of a trade union unless he resides in Mauritius and

(i) He is bona fide engaged in a trade which the trade union purports to represent; or

(ii) If he is not so engaged, he has been so engaged at any time for a period amounting in the aggregate to, not less than 18 months.

(c) The minimum age for membership of a trade union is 16 years or such greater age as may be specified in the rules of the trade union.

(d) Subject to the rules of the trade union a member of a trade union who is a minor may enjoy all rights of a member, and may execute any instrument or give any discharge required under the rules of the trade union. However, the minor is not qualified to become an officer of the trade union.

Paragraph 2 (a) of the guidelines

60. The law provides that a trade union can be refused registration if its membership is open to persons who are not engaged in the same trade, or in similar or connected trades or in the same undertaking.

Paragraph 2 (b) of the guidelines

61. A member of the disciplined forces (i.e. a naval, military or air force, the police force, fire service and the Mauritius Prison Service), a member of a visiting force and a person in the service of the State who is not a public officer cannot exercise the right to join or form trade unions of workers.

Paragraph 2 (c) of the guidelines

62. The Industrial Relations Act also provides that two or more trade unions (including federations) may combine to form a federation or amalgamate to form one trade union if a resolution for federation or amalgamation is approved, on a ballot at a general meeting of every trade union concerned, by a majority of all the members of that trade union who are not disqualified from voting.

63. The Industrial Relations Act does not prohibit trade unions from joining international trade union organizations. There is in fact no practical restriction on this matter as far as the Mauritius authorities are aware.

Paragraph 2 (d) of the guidelines

64. The conditions or limitations placed upon the right of trade unions to function freely are described in annex V.

Paragraph 2 (e) of the guidelines

65. Information on the number and structure of trade unions and their membership is submitted in annex VI*.

Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the guidelines

66. The Mauritian Constitution does not specifically guarantee the right to strike as it already guarantees freedom of association in line with article 8 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

67. The right to strike is subject to the prior observance of the procedures outlined in section 92 of the Industrial Relations Act (a copy of the provision is provided in annex VII*) which in effect lays emphasis on the use of negotiation, conciliation mediation and arbitration at various levels as valuable alternatives to open industrial action through strikes to lock-outs or as a prerequisite for such action.

68. Members of the disciplined forces cannot form part of trade unions and therefore cannot avail themselves of the procedures provided for in the Industrial Relations Act. Consequently disciplined forces are precluded from strike action. Apart from this restriction no other restriction applies to the exercise of rights outlined in the Industrial Relations Act.

Article 9

Paragraph 2 of the guidelines

The social security provisions are as follows:

Medical care	Medical care is free
Cash sickness benefits	Provided for under the labour laws
Maternity benefits	Provided for under the labour laws

Old age benefits	Non-contributory old age benefits are provided under the National Pensions Scheme
Invalidity benefits	Non-contributory invalids benefits are provided under the National Pensions Scheme
Survivors' benefits	Provided under the National Pensions Scheme Widows and Orphans
Employment injury benefits	Provided under the National Pensions Scheme
Unemployment benefits	Unemployment benefits are provided for unemployed heads of household on an income-tested basis
Family benefits	Family benefits are provided for parents having at least three children whose annual income does not exceed Rs 10 000

Paragraph 3 of the guidelines

Non-contributory and contributory benefits - categories of persons covered under the National Pensions Scheme

1. Private sector, para-statal organizations, Sugar Industry Pension Fund and non-citizens

69. Contributions are compulsorily payable in respect of employees of the private sector provided they earn the minimum prescribed amount. Contributions have also to be paid by para-statal organizations in respect of temporary employees or part-time employees for whom no contributions are paid to SICOM Ltd. Excluded from National Pension Fund coverage are 5,000 employees of the sugar industry who were already members of the Sugar Industry Pension Fund on 31 December 1973, as they remain covered under that Fund.

70. Non-citizens who have a valid work permit are covered under the NPS as from the third year in employment.

2. Employees 18 to 60 or 65 years of age

71. Contributions are payable in respect of an employee from the age of 18 up to the normal retirement age of 60. However, an employee can defer his claim for a contributory retirement pension until the age of 65, in which case contributions have to be paid by the employee and his employer up to that age. If the employee opts to claim his contributory retirement pension at the age of 60 and continues to be employed, the employer has to pay only his share of contributions to the scheme until the employee reaches the age of 65 or until his retirement if he retires before that age.

3. Industrial injury and occupational disease - young persons from 15 to 18 years of age

72. A young person between the ages of 15 and 18 is covered for industrial injury and occupational diseases under the NPS although contributions are not payable on his behalf by his employer.

4. Self-employed and non-employed persons

73. The National Pension Act also provides for the payment of contributions on a voluntary basis by self-employed and non-employed persons. Contributions may be paid in multiples of five rupees, the maximum amount of contributions being Rs 160 a month. All contributions paid are increased by 50 per cent, as a subsidy by the NPS in order to enhance the quantum of pension entitlement by 50 per cent and also to encourage these categories of persons to join the scheme.

Contribution rates

74. Contributions are payable at the rate of 10.5 per cent by millers and large employers of the sugar industry (those having at least 100 arpents of sugar-cane cultivation). All other employers pay contributions at the rate of 6 per cent. The share of the employee's contributions in both cases is 3 per cent. Employees of the sugar industry are entitled to pensions at a higher rate as they earn a higher number of pension points.

75. The Act provides that employers can apply to the Minister to pay contributions at a special rate of 8.5 per cent, in which case their employees have to contribute at the rate of 5 per cent. Such employees are entitled to the same enhanced pension coverage as employees of the sugar industry.

76. The minimum monthly remuneration on which contributions are payable is Rs 315 for household employees and Rs 525 for other employees. The maximum monthly remuneration on which contributions are payable for both categories is Rs 4,235. Contributions are not payable on bonus or overtime pay.

Basic retirement pension

77. The basic retirement pension is payable to every Mauritius citizen aged 60 or over who has resided in Mauritius for an aggregate period of 12 years since attaining the age of 18. The residence qualification does not apply for a Mauritius citizen aged 70 or over. Non-citizens must have resided in Mauritius for at least 15 years in aggregate since attaining the age of 40, 3 of those 15 years being immediately before the claim is made.

78. The amounts payable are: Rs 572 per month for a person between the ages of 60 and 74; Rs 715 per month for a person between the ages of 75 and 89; and Rs 3,410 per month for a person aged 90 and over.

Basic widow's pension

79. The basic widow's pension is payable to widows under the age of 60; these persons should have been civilly or religiously married. A widow who is a

non-citizen must have resided in Mauritius for at least 5 years in aggregate in the 10 years preceding the claims, one of those 5 years being immediately before the claim. The amount payable is Rs 572 per month. Payment of the pension ceases on remarriage.

Basic invalid's pension

80. The basic invalid's pension is payable to persons aged between 15 and 60 years who have been certified by a medical board to be either permanently or substantially incapacitated to work to a degree of 60 per cent and for a period of at least 12 months. A residence qualification applies to an invalid person who is a non-citizen. The amount payable is Rs 527 per month.

Basic orphan's pension

81. This pension is payable to young persons up to the age of 15 (or 20 if in full-time education) whose parents are dead or unknown. For a non-citizen one of the parents should have resided in Mauritius for at least 5 years in aggregate in the 10 years preceding the claim, one of these 5 years being immediately before the claim. The amount payable is Rs 230 per month.

Guardian's allowance

82. This allowance is payable to a person looking after an orphan. If the guardian is a non-citizen, he should have resided in Mauritius for at least 5 years in aggregate in the 10 years immediately preceding the claim, one of those 5 years being immediately before the date of the claim. The amount payable is Rs 143 per month.

Child allowance

83. This allowance is payable to the children of a beneficiary of a basic widow's pension or a basic invalid's pension. The child should be under the age of 15 (or 20 if in full-time education). It is payable in respect of not more than three children:

For a child under the age of 10	Rs 113 per month
For a child aged 10 and over	Rs 174 per month

Payment of the allowance continues for the benefit of the children even after remarriage of the widow.

Inmate's allowance

84. This is payable to the inmates of government subsidized institutions on condition that they would have been entitled to a basic pension before their admission to such institutions. The amount payable is Rs 81 per month.

Enhanced basic retirement pensions

85. Beneficiaries of basic retirement pensions who are totally blind or who suffer from total paralysis or who need the constant care and attention of another person receive an additional benefit of: Rs 1,144 per month between the ages of 60 and 67; Rs 1,287 per month between the ages of 75 and 89; and Rs 3,982 per month aged 90 and above.

Carer's allowance

86. The carer's allowance is payable to beneficiaries of the basic invalidity pension who need the constant care and attention of another person. The amount payable is Rs 476 per month.

87. The prescribed rates of benefits effective as from July 1993 are as follows.

Type of benefit	Rate (Rs)
Basic retirement pension	
(a) 60-74 years	572
(b) 75-89 years	715
(c) 90 years and over	3 410
Basic retirement pension for disabled persons	
(a) 60-74 years	1 114
(b) 75-89 years	1 287
(c) 90 years and over	3 982
Basic invalid's pension	572
Additional basic invalid's pension	476
Basic widow's pension	572
Child allowance	
(a) Under 10 years	113
(b) 10 years and over	174
Orphan's basic pension	230
Guardian's allowance	143

Inmates allowances (pocket allowance)	81
Minimum contributory retirement pension	143

Contributory retirement pension

88. The contributory retirement pension is payable to a person on reaching the age of 60 if he has contributed to the National Pensions Fund (NPF). The amount payable annually is the number of pension points x value of a pension point x 2. (Divide by 12 for the monthly amount.)

Contributory widow's pension

89. This is payable to a widow whose late spouse had contributed to the National Pensions Fund. The amount payable monthly is 20 x average annual number of pension points x value of one pension point, divided by 12. The contributory widow's pension is reduced to two-thirds of this amount after one year if the widow has no dependent child. A lump sum equivalent to 12 months contributory widow's pension is payable upon remarriage.

90. On reaching the age of 60, the widow inherits the same pension that her late husband would have been entitled to as a contributory retirement pension. This pension is payable for life, with annual increases.

Contributory invalid's pension

91. This pension is payable to a person who suffers from a permanent incapacity of at least 60 per cent. That person must have contributed to the National Pensions Fund. The amount payable is the same as for the contributory widow's pension.

Contributory orphans' pension

92. This is payable to orphans under the age of 15 (18 if at school), if either of the deceased parents had contributed to the National Pension Fund. The amount payable is 15 per cent of the contributory pension that either of the parents would have been entitled to.

Survivor's pension (Industrial accident)

93. This pension is payable to the widow of an insured worker who died as a result of an industrial accident. A widower's survivor's pension is payable only where the husband suffers from a permanent incapacity of at least 60 per cent. The amount payable is 50 per cent of the insurable salary of the deceased worker.

Dependant's pension (Industrial accident)

94. This is payable to a close relative who was dependent on the deceased employee, if the latter leaves no surviving spouse or children.

Orphan's industrial injury allowance (Industrial accident)

95. This allowance is payable to orphans whose parents die after an industrial accident. The amount payable is 7.5 per cent of the insurable salary of either of the deceased parents.

Social aid

96. The Social Aid Act was replaced by a new one in 1983 with a view to providing greater possibilities for assisting vulnerable groups.

97. The main thrust of the Social Aid Division is to devise and implement policies and programmes aimed at providing adequate protection to vulnerable groups of the population, such as the elderly, the disabled, the needy, widows and orphans. With the advent of the new legislation, many types of benefits are being provided; they include the following:

Payment of examination fees in respect of needy students;

Funeral grant in the event of the death of the claimant or that of any of his dependants;

Allowance to fishermen;

Gift to centenarians;

Allowance to fire victims.

98. Increases in the scale rates of social aid have been approved with effect from 1 July 1993 as follows:

	Amount per month (Rs)
Claimant's allowance	308
Spouse's allowance (limited to one spouse)	308
Child's allowance:	
(a) For every child under the age of 10	107
(b) For every child between the ages of 10 and 15	141
(c) For every child between the ages of 15 and 20 who	
(i) is receiving full time education; or	178
(ii) is unable to earn a living because of a physical or mental disability and is not in receipt of a benefit under the National Pensions Act	307

Compassionate allowance, where the claimant or any of his dependants satisfies the Minister that he is suffering from any illness certified by an approved medical practitioner (up to a maximum of)	178
Rent allowance - 50 per cent of the rent paid by claimant up to a maximum of	205
Examination fees	
Issue of spectacles	
Refund of travelling expenses	
Assistance in kind	
Funeral grant (in the event of the death of the claimant or that of any of his dependants)	1 177

Part II

Minimum social aid	205

Private or charitable institutions	Amount payable
Grant for every inmate	Rs 36 per day
Grant for maintenance of buildings	Rs 589 per month
Grant for such staff as may be approved by the Minister	Rs 1 308 per month
Contribution in respect of every inmate	Rs 589 per annum
Contributions in kind	
Inmates allowance to inmates who qualified for social aid before their admission to a charitable institution	Rs 81 per month

Schedule to social aid regulations

Part I

Increases in the scale rates of social aid have been approved with effect from 1 July 1993 as follows:

Allowance to a fisherman	Rs 47 per day
Allowance to cyclone refugees	Rs 24 per head per night

Allowance to flood victims	Rs 24 per day per member of household
Grant to discharged prisoners	Rs 59
Gift to a centenarian	Rs 10 000
Allowance to a fire victim for the the purchase of foodstuffs	Rs 500 per member of household
Allowance to fire victims in respect of:	
(a) Clothing	Rs 500 per member of the household
(b) Cooking utensils	Rs 500 per member of the household
(c) Furniture	Rs 500 per member of the household
(d) Resettlement allowance (to head of household)	Rs 1 000 household

Part II

	Amount per month
Allowance to a beneficiary of the basic retirement pension living alone and paying rent	Rs 400
Examination fee in respect of a child for:	
(a) Cambridge School Certificate	
(b) Higher School Certificate	
(c) General Certificate of Education, London (Ordinary and Advanced)	
(d) General Certificate of Education, Cambridge (Ordinary and Advanced)	
Issue of free spectacles to the applicant and dependants where the spectacles have been prescribed by the Ministry of Health	

Funeral grant to:

(a) An applicant, in the event of death of any of his dependants; or — Rs 1 177

(b) An applicant's spouse or any of his dependants, in the event of death of applicant

Part IV

Guardian's allowance — Rs 143

Orphans's allowance for every orphan who:

(a) Is receiving full-time education and who is aged 15 years and over, until the end of the school year in which he attains the age of 20; or — Rs 178

(b) Is between the ages of 15 and 20 and who is unable to earn a living because of a physical or mental disability and is not in receipt of a benefit under the National Pensions Act — Rs 307

Abandoned child's allowance:

(a) For every child under the age of 10 — Rs 107

(b) For every child between the ages of 10 and 15 — Rs 141

(c) For every child who:

(i) Is receiving full-time education and who is aged 15 years and over and until the end of the school year in which he attains the age of 20; or — Rs 178

(ii) Is between the ages of 15 and 20 and who is unable to earn a living because of a physical or mental disability and is not in receipt of a benefit under the National Pensions Act

Part V

Child's allowance:

(a) For every child under the age of 10 — Rs 107

(b) For every child between the ages of 10 and 15 — Rs 141

Compassionate allowance (up to a maximum of)	Rs	178
Carer's allowance, in lieu of child's allowance and compassionate allowance, for a child between the age of 3 years and 15 years, where the child suffers from a permanent disability of at least 60 per cent and is in need of constant care and attention as certified by a medical board	Rs	476

Part VI

Applicant's allowance	Rs	308
Spouse's allowance (limited to one spouse)	Rs	308
Child's allowance:		
(a) For every child under the age of 10	Rs	107
(b) For every child between the ages of 10 and 15	Rs	141
(c) For every child who:		
(i) Is receiving full-time education who is aged 15 years and over and until the end of school year in which he attains the age of 20; or	Rs	178
(ii) Is between the age of 15 and 20 and who is unable to earn a living because of a physical or mental disability and is not in receipt of a benefit under the National Pensions Act	Rs	307
Compassionate allowance where the applicant or any of his dependants satisfies the Minister that he is suffering from any serious illness certified by an approved medical practitioner	Rs	178
Rent allowance (50 per cent of the rent paid by the claimant up to a maximum of)	Rs	205
Examination fees		
Issue of spectacles		
Assistance in kind		
Funeral grant in the event of death of the applicant or that of any of his dependants	Rs	1 177

Part VII

Grant for purchase of medicines — Rs 271

Part VIII

Allowance for purchase of rice and flour — Rs 25 per member of household per month

99. A Rs 25 rice and flour allowance is payable to every needy person and to every dependant of a beneficiary. There are three categories of beneficiaries:

(i) All recipients of social aid and their dependants - 8,700 recipients;

(ii) All beneficiaries of unemployment hardship relief - about 550 beneficiaries;

(iii) All needy beneficiaries of a basic pension under the National Pensions Act, that is, beneficiaries of basic retirement, widow's, invalid and orphan's pensions, who would have qualified to receive social aid if the basic pensions were not payable.

It is estimated that the total number of beneficiaries of the allowance, together with their dependants, would be around 100,000. Examples of beneficiaries of a basic pension who would qualify for the allowance are:

(a) A beneficiary of the basic retirement pension (BRP), the basic widow's pension (BWP), or the basic invalid's pension (BIP) living alone and having an income of less than Rs 716 per month, other than his basic pension, would qualify for the allowance.

(b) A beneficiary of BRP, BWP or BIP, living with his/her spouse, would qualify to receive the allowance if the total income of the spouses, other than the basic pension, is less than Rs 1,332 per month. It would not make any difference if the spouse also is a beneficiary of a basic pension as the pension is not considered to be an income.

(c) A beneficiary of BRP, BWP or BIP, having one dependent child between 15 and 20 years, will qualify for the allowance if income of spouses is less than Rs 1,072 monthly.

(d) A beneficiary of BRP, BWP or BIP, having a spouse and one dependent child between 15 and 20 years, will qualify for the allowance if the income of the spouses is less than Rs 1,688 a month.

(e) A beneficiary of BRP, BWP, BIP, with a spouse and two dependent children, one between 15 and 20 years, the other between 10 and 15 years, will qualify to receive the allowance if the total income of the spouses does not exceed Rs 1,970 a month.

(f) A beneficiary of BRP, BWP, or BIP with a spouse and three dependent children, one less thar 10 years, one between 10 and 15 years and one between 15 and 20 years, would qualify to receive the allowance if the total income of the spouses is Rs 2,184 a month.

Note: (i) The allowance is payable in respect of each dependant, even where the number of children is more than three.

(ii) The income to qualify for the allowance will be higher if rent is paid by the beneficiary.

(g) A beneficiary of BRP, BWP or BIP with a spouse and a child under 20 years in employment, but with the spouses having no income other than the basic pension, would qualify for the allowance if the child's income is less than Rs 4,070 a month.

(h) A beneficiary of BRP, BWP or BIP, having a child under 20 years in employment but no income of his own other than his pension, would qualify for the allowance if the income of the child is Rs 2,530 a month.

Paragraph 4 of the guidelines

100. The percentage of GNP and of the national budget spent on social security in 1992/1993 and 10 years previously is indicated in the following table:

	1982/1983	1992/1993
GNP market price	Rs 11 843 m	Rs 51 437 m
National budget (recurrent)	Rs 3 709.76 m	Rs 10 894.1 m
Social security budget	Rs 269.8 m	Rs 1 204.9 m
% social security budget over national budget	7.3%	11.1%
% social security budget over GNP	2.28%	2.34%

Over the past 10 years the Government has been paying greater attention to the social sector with a view to providing added protection to the vulnerable groups of the population.

Paragraph 5 of the guidelines

101. All the social security schemes referred to are implemented by the public sector. However a few service sectors like private insurance companies and other private organizations run different social security schemes with regard to medical expenses and retirement benefits.

Paragraph 6 of the guidelines

102. All workers, including seasonal and part-time workers are covered under the National Pensions Scheme, provided they earn the minimum salary on which contributions are payable. No groups are excluded from social security schemes.

Paragraph 7 of the guidelines

103. In view of the ageing pattern of the population, the extension of the retirement age (at present 60 years) is being considered.

Paragraph 8 of the guidelines

104. We are relying on our own resources in the implementation of the right enshrined in article 9.

Article 10

Paragraph 1 of the guidelines

105. Mauritius acceded to:

(a) The Convention on the Rights of the Child in July 1992;

(b) The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1984.

It has also ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), as well as the following other ILO conventions:

(i) Minimum Age (Industry) Convention No. 5 of 1919;

(ii) Minimum Age (Sea) Convention No. 7 of 1920 revised by Convention No. 58 of 1938 and Convention No. 138 of 1973;

(iii) Minimum Age (Trimmers and Stokers) Convention No. 15 of 1921; and

(iv) Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea) Convention No. 16 of 1921.

Paragraph 2 of the guidelines

106. The term "family" in our society basically refers to a group of persons related by birth or marriage who live together in the same household. It has, however, a broad connotation which englobes extended as well as nuclear families.

Paragraph 3 of the guidelines

107. Children are deemed to attain their majority in Mauritius at the age of 18.

Paragraph 4 of the guidelines

108. Assistance and protection to the family are given in both formal (such as under the Family Allowance Scheme) and informal ways (for example through the Ministry's Family Counselling Service, which provides specialist advice to families/individuals in need, and through a multitude of activities carried out by the Ministry's Social Welfare Department).

Paragraph 4 (a)

109. The right of men and women to enter into marriage with their full and free consent and to establish a family is embodied in the law of the land, provided that the individual is 18 years or above.

Paragraph 4 (b)

110. With the creation of national machinery, the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare, in 1982, the Government of Mauritius undertook a commitment to strengthen and to protect the family, including children. Several policy measures have been taken to promote family welfare, for example, the setting up of such services under the aegis of the Ministry as:

(a) The Family Counselling Service, which provides both individual and mass counselling to men, women and children;

(b) The National Children's Council to promote the welfare of children;

(c) The National Women's Council to promote the status of women;

(d) The National Adoption Council to protect children eligible for adoption.

Moreover, five day-care centres which cater for children up to the age of three years are operational under the aegis of the Ministry of Women's Rights.

Paragraph 5 of the guidelines

111. In principle all female employees employed in a substantive capacity are granted 12 weeks' leave with full pay for each confinement in respect of three confinements, to be taken either before or after the birth of the child at the discretion of the employee.

112. Where an employee gives birth to a stillborn child, her absence from work may be reckoned as sick leave on production of a medical certificate, or as maternity leave. In addition to these leaves, women working in the Export Processing Zone (EPZ), in non-EPZ sugar and tea industries, in salt manufacturing industries, animal farming and other sectors such as nursing homes, the catering industry, printing and construction, benefit from maternity allowances at the rate of an average of Rs 100 per month.

113. Time off for prenatal treatment is reckoned against sick or casual or vacation leave provisions.

114. Mothers who wish to take advantage of leave without pay in the six-month period following confinement to look after their babies are granted up to three months' leave without pay.

115. In February 1990 the provisions concerning maternity benefits in Remuneration Orders were uniformized and now provide that every female worker who has remained in continuous employment with the same employer for 12 months immediately preceding her confinement is entitled, on production of a medical certificate, to the following:

(a) Twelve weeks' leave on full pay to be taken at her discretion before and/or after confinement, provided that at least six weeks' leave shall be taken immediately following the confinement;

(b) An allowance of Rs 300 payable within seven days of her confinement.

116. Following recommendations from the National Remuneration Board the allowance of Rs 300 has recently been increased to Rs 500 in the following sectors:

Distributive trades;

Field crop and orchard workers;

Livestock breeding;

Public transport (buses);

Security guards;

Baking industry;

Road haulage industry;

Light metal and wooden furniture industries.

117. In the sugar industry and the tea industry a female worker is entitled to 800 ml of milk per day during the three months following her confinement or an allowance of Rs 3 per day if milk is not readily available.

118. Female workers drawing less than Rs 72,000 per annum and not covered by any Remuneration Orders are also entitled, in accordance with the Labour Act, to leave on full pay for six weeks before confinement and six weeks following confinement, provided they have been in continuous employment with the same employer for more than 12 months.

119. A female worker who is nursing her unweaned child is entitled, in accordance with the Labour Act, to a break of one hour daily or a break of half an hour twice daily for the purpose of nursing her unweaned child.

Paragraph 6 of the guidelines

120. Child labour is prohibited for children below the age of 15 years under the labour laws of Mauritius. Young persons (15-18 years) are also protected by these labour laws in regard to harmful and dangerous employment such as employment in the explosives industry, etc.

121. All citizens are treated equally under the rule of law.

122. The Labour Act 1975 prohibits the employment of children under the age of 15 years. Workplaces are regularly visited by officers of the Labour Inspectorate and whenever cases of child employment are detected, appropriate action is taken. Any complaints of child employment are promptly investigated and any such employment is stopped immediately. Where the infringement is established beyond any reasonable doubt, the court inflicts appropriate fines.

123. The Labour Act also prohibits employment of young persons (between the age of 15 and 18 years) in work which is harmful to health, dangerous or otherwise unsuitable for a young person.

124. The minimum age for paid employment is generally 15 years.

Paragraph 7 of the guidelines

125. The initial and second report under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was submitted by the Government of Mauritius in 1992 and a review of that report is in the process of preparation.

126. In the past women occupied a subordinate role in society, but the Government, through the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare has tried to promote equality by eliminating various restrictions which existed in various pieces of legislation.

127. Moreover, the appropriate legislation (Code Napoleon) has been amended to enable a widow to have a right of succession with regard to her late spouse's property. Further, the surviving spouse now has a right of usufruct with regard to that part of the property of the late spouse that was being used as a conjugal home. A woman married under the system of community of goods has the right to administer her earnings without being answerable to her husband. An amendment has also been introduced to enable a woman to choose a profession without consulting her husband. She now has shared responsibilities with her husband in choosing a place of residence. The Jury Act has been amended to enable women to act as members of a jury. The Income Tax Act has also been amended to enable women to enjoy the same benefits as their male counterparts regarding income tax deductions. Legislation amended in favour of women also relate to:

(a) Domestic workers

128. Since 1981, female workers working on contract of four days or more per week have benefited from 12 weeks' maternity leave. The wages of domestic workers were increased in 1988 by 25 per cent. Transport is provided by the

employer for workers from their place of residence or from the place of work or both if the worker is required to attend or cease work at a time when no bus is available.

129. A disturbance allowance is payable to a worker who is required to work in a place outside his/her normal place of employment. Moreover, an employer cannot compel a worker to work and stay in a place outside the normal place of employment for a period exceeding three days.

(b) Sugar and tea sectors

130. In 1987, the optional age for retirement for female workers with at least 10 years' service in the sugar sector was lowered from 58 to 55 years. In the tea sector, female field workers with at least 10 years' service may retire at the age of 58.

131. Female field workers on sugar plantations having to lift weights have to be assisted by a male worker, while female tea workers are called to lift or carry loads of not more than 18 kg.

132. Female workers of both sectors benefit from a milk allowance during the first three months after confinement.

133. To bridge the gap in wages between male and female workers in the sugar sector, a wage increase of 4 per cent was granted. Moreover, female workers above 55 years of age in the same sector working on an eight-hour day basis are prohibited from doing plantation work and carrying scum and sand. Female sugar workers who suffer a miscarriage are entitled to a maximum of two weeks' leave on full pay. The maternity and midwife allowances have also been increased. A severance allowance is payable to female field workers who retire voluntarily before attaining the age of 60.

(c) Salt manufacturing sector and animal farming

134. Work involving the carrying of loads of more than 18 kg is prohibited for female workers in both the salt and farming sectors. In the salt industry, maternity leave of 6 weeks before and 6 weeks after confinement is converted to 12 weeks leave to be taken at the worker's discretion before and/or after confinement. In the farming sector, a female worker who has entered her sixth month of pregnancy is given only light work, while in the salt sector, lifting or carrying of baskets of salt is prohibited for female workers entering their seventh month of pregnancy. Furthermore a female salt worker who suffers a miscarriage becomes entitled to a minimum of two weeks' leave on full pay. The female salt worker with 10 years' service may retire at the age of 55.

135. In animal farming, hard work like forking, uprooting, heavy cleaning, etc. is prohibited for female workers.

(d) Factory workers (non-EPZ) and export enterprises (EPZ)

136. Today, male and female workers suffer no discrimination on the grounds of sex, drawing the same wages for the same work, inasmuch as since 1 July 1987, they are no longer classified separately. A female factory

worker doing the job of a factory operator is classified and paid as such. However, work involving continuous standing is prohibited for female workers who have entered their seventh month of pregnancy.

(e) Other sectors (nursing homes, catering industry, printing and construction)

137. Maternity allowances in the nursing home, catering industry and printing sectors have been raised, while in the construction sector maternity benefits of 12 weeks' leave can be taken at the worker's discretion before and/or after confinement, limited to three confinements.

138. Furthermore, in 1989, desk officers were appointed in all key ministries to ensure that the gender issue is taken into consideration in global policy formulation.

139. Today, growing numbers of women form part of the country's work force and provision has been made to allow women to benefit from longer maternity leave. It is not true to say that equal pay for equal work is not enforced. The policy adopted by the Ministry which is reflected in labour laws is that of "Equal pay for work of equal value".

140. It is true that women cannot transmit citizenship to their foreign-born children and foreign husbands, but the latter can obtain residence and work permits provided they satisfy the required conditions.

141. In view of the fact that numerous cases of domestic violence are being reported, a Family Counselling Service has been set up where psychologists and lawyers provide counselling. Moreover, a shelter for women and children in distress provides temporary accommodation to those in need.

Children

142. Children and young people are made aware of their respective rights through sensitization programmes undertaken, inter alia, by the Workers' Education Branch of the Ministry of Labour and by the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare, which is already implementing a sensitization programme on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

143. The Government's scope of action in the area of children's rights and welfare will be greatly increased by a forthcoming child protection bill which is under preparation and will go a long way towards empowering the Government to protect directly children in difficult circumstances.

144. Children's rights and their welfare are also taken care of by the National Adoption Council, another parastatal body attached to the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare. Through the necessary inquiries and the imposition of proper procedures, this Council sees to it that the rights and welfare of children are catered for in cases of adoption of Mauritian children by foreigners.

145. Government actions in providing protection and affording welfare to children go beyond mere counselling and sensitization. Inquiries are carried out by the National Children's Council to lay bare the source(s) of child abuse in each particular case reported. A National Action Plan for the development of the child has been worked out and will be implemented soon. Foreign assistance has also been obtained for the setting up of creativity centres for children so as to allow children to develop their creative talents.

Paragraph 8 of the guidelines

146. The Ministry has obtained the full support of United Nations agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA in the realization of policies geared towards the promotion of the welfare of women, children and the family.

Article 11

Paragraph 1 (a) of the guidelines

147. The rapid growth of the economy over the past decade has resulted in a perceptible and continued improvement in the economic well-being of the average Mauritian, with far-reaching implications on the social front.

Health

148. With improvements in the economic situation and general welfare, the health status of the nation has shown a marked improvement. Life expectancy has continued to improve for both sexes and it stood at 73.4 for females and 65.6 for males in 1992.

149. A similar improvement was noted in the infant mortality rate which decreased from a high of 25.6 per 1,000 births in 1970 to 18.4 in 1992.

150. Health services both in terms of physical facilities and health manpower have also progressed significantly. The number of health institutions increased steadily from 203 in 1981 to 422 in 1992.

Education

151. According to the 1990 Housing and Population Census, the overall literacy rate stood at 81.4 while the male and female rates were 86.3 and 73.6 respectively.

Income distribution

152. There has also been a significant improvement in the income distribution pattern in the country, despite the highly unequal structure of asset ownership, in particular land. The Gini coefficient declined from 0.445 in 1980-1981 to 0.379 in 1991-1992.

Income distribution 1980/81 to 1991/92

	1980/81	1986/87	1991/92
Average monthly income per household (Rs)	2 212	3 496	6 503
Median income (Rs)	1 518	2 663	5 300
Gini coefficient	0.445	0.396	0.379

153. Per capita incomes have increased severalfold in real terms over the past few decades to reach nearly US$ 3,000 in 1993. The development strategy has always had a social bias and the achievement of high rates of growth has been accompanied by measures encouraging upward social mobility and indirect redistribution, including a variety of social safety net type devices.

154. The attainment of full employment has been the great leveller in the country. It has effectively liberated females from household chores. It has enabled the economic betterment of the great majority of the population, in all ethnic groups and income categories without distinction.

Paragraph 1 (c) of the guidelines

155. We have not yet defined the "poverty line" for Mauritius. However, it is envisaged to carry out a study on poverty in Mauritius with external assistance. The terms of reference for the study have already been proposed. One of the study objectives is to identify the pockets of poverty. Moreover, it is planned to undertake a survey in order to generate series of data which would assist in the preparation of a more precise indicator or a qualitative range of indicators.

Paragraph 1 (d) of the guidelines

156. Mauritius is envisaging establishing a physical quality of life index within the next two years.

Paragraph 2 of the guidelines

157. The right to adequate food is determined by the level of our food security. Food security is defined as access by all people at all times to the food needed for a healthy life. Mauritius has achieved food security and the degree of such food security is being improved all the time through the formulation and implementation of various policies and programmes which are all geared to each other to improve the well-being of the population.

158. Mauritius is heavily dependent on imports for its food supplies, especially for its main staples, rice and flour. It imports the total amount of its basic staples, as well as over 80 per cent of its consumption needs in milk, beef, mutton and so on. In 1992, Mauritius imported 64,000 tonnes of

rice, 100,000 tonnes of wheat and wheat flour as well as 10,989 tonnes of live cattle, some 15,700 tonnes of meat and meat products and 13,479 tonnes of milk and cream, for a total value of 1,075.2 million rupees.

159. Data on imports of selected agricultural and food products during the period 1983-1992 indicate increased consumption of agricultural food products over the decade and an improvement in the purchasing power of the population as a consequence of a stable economy, almost full employment and corresponding income increases.

160. Domestic food production consists mainly of food crops (maize, potato, pulses, vegetables and fruit), milk, meat and fish.

161. Foodcrop production is mainly carried out by some 7,000 growers on sugar-cane rotational lands and interlines but sometimes in pure stands. Almost all our requirements of fresh vegetables are met but the country resorts to imports, especially of potatoes or onions when climatic conditions are unfavourable. Some 70,000 tonnes of foodcrops and 10,800 tonnes of fruit are produced annually. Occasionally, the country resorts to importation whenever local production of, for example, potatoes, onions, ginger, garlic and fruit is inadequate.

162. The livestock sector consists of traditional raising of cattle, pigs, sheep and goats. Twenty thousand small breeders are involved in livestock production, almost exclusively on a part-time basis. Apart from poultry, pork and pork products, in which it is almost self-sufficient, the country imports most of its requirements.

163. Likewise, fisheries production is mainly carried out artisanally; some 3,000 fishermen being involved in a total catch of some 1,775 tonnes of fish, which is wholly locally consumed. However, Mauritian and foreign vessels are also exploiting the banks of our outer islands, a total catch of 260,000 tonnes was possible in 1992. Most of the fish caught is canned for export and a small quantity is sold locally. Attempts are made to diversify the fisheries sector and there is increasing involvement in prawn and shrimp production, components of marine aquaculture.

164. Regarding food consumption, the staple foods are rice and flour although the consumption of potatoes is also significant. With increasing incomes, food consumption is rising steadily; rising incomes tend to favour consumption of better quality foods such as meat and fish. The pattern of food consumption varies with the nature of work performed; hard working people consume three to four meals of rice or flour per day, while others have generally one meal per day.

165. All data regarding food production, importation and consumption are collected and compiled in a Food Balance Sheet every year by the Central Statistical Office. Every five years, a household budget survey is undertaken to collect information on household consumption expenditures in order to update the market basket of goods and services used for the computation of the Consumer Price Index. As a by-product, the survey provides information useful for various types of analysis which are used to assess and monitor the food

and nutrition situation. There are also regular population and housing censuses, from which data can be extracted to interpret food consumption trends and living standards.

166. In addition to the above-mentioned regular surveys, the Ministry of Health has carried out specific surveys (with the assistance of United Nations agencies, mainly UNICEF and WHO), namely:

Mauritius Nutrition Survey 0-5 years (1985);

Non-Communicable Disease Survey 25-75 years (1987);

Diet and Lifestyle Survey in Youth 5-25 years (1988).

Nutritional problems in Mauritius

167. Mauritius presents both the nutritional problems of the developing countries and those of the developed world, that is, the problem of undernutrition and overnutrition and the high prevalence of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases.

Undernutrition

168. There is evidence of undernutrition in children in Mauritius as indicated by growth deficits. The incidence of underweight (low weight for age), stunted (low height for age) and wasted (low weight for height) children aged 0 to 12 years was estimated in three surveys. Indices of growth status were calculated using WHO recommended reference and cut-off points.

Growth deficits in children 0-10 years

Growth Status	% Incidence Rate			
	Mauritius		Rodrigues	
	1985	1988	1985	1989
	0-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	0-5 yrs	5-10 yrs
Underweight	23.9	18	12	8.1
Stunted	21.5	12	17.5	9.5
Wasted	16.2	22.4	4.9	6.4

169. In children under 10 years, growth deficits were related to location, ethnicity and socio-economic status of respondents. The incidence of underweight children was higher in rural areas than in urban areas of Mauritius. This may be related to differences in the geographical distribution of various ethnic groups. The highest percentage of underweight and wasted children were encountered in the Hindu population. There was, however, no association between ethnicity and chronic undernutrition as indicated by stunting.

170. Infant mortality in Mauritius was on average 19.9 per 1,000 live births in 1990. In the Black River district infant mortality was 34 per cent higher than the island average, indicating a possible focus of undernutrition in that district.

171. Nutritional assessment of the diet of children under 10 years has not yet been carried out. However, in a study of feeding patterns of children under one year, those who were receiving breast milk showed the least evidence of being underweight. The premature cessation of breast-feeding in Mauritius is of major concern. The most recent comprehensive survey of breast-feeding was carried out in 1983. Around 90 per cent of mothers had at sometime breast-fed their infants, but only 21 per cent breast-fed exclusively for three months and 11 per cent for four months. In their analysis of the main reasons for stopping breast-feeding, the survey workers identified hospital practices detrimental to the establishment of lactation.

Anaemia

172. General undernutrition and micro-nutrient deficiencies may be manifested as various forms of anaemia. Anaemia, as indicated by low haemoglobin (Hb) levels, is prevalent in children under five years in Mauritius. It is also evident, but to a lesser extent, in older children and youths.

Blood haemoglobin levels in children and youths

Hb levels	% of respondents	
	1985 survey	1988 survey
	0-5 years	5-18 years
Below 10g/dl	31.7	3.1
Below 11g/dl a/	51	9.9

a/ WHO recommendation for reporting low Hb level in children.

173. The location, ethnic group and sex of respondents had bearings on the incidence of anaemia, as indicated by low Hb levels in children and youths aged 5 to 18 years. The incidence was higher in rural than in urban regions; it was highest in the Hindu and lowest in the Chinese population. Females showed a higher incidence of anaemia than males, this difference being most marked in the 13 to 18 year age group (11.7 per cent for females against 6.5 per cent for males). This data confirms the vulnerability of females to anaemia after puberty.

174. A survey of Export Processing Zone workers found that anaemia, as indicated by low Hb levels, is twice as prevalent in females than in males. Results of this survey also suggest anaemia is more prevalent in Export Processing Zone workers than in the 13 to 18 year olds assessed in a previous survey.

175. Anaemia was also detected by clinical examination of children under 5 years. Marked clinical anaemia, as shown on the inner lips and inner eyelids, was evident in 9.4 per cent of children examined in Mauritius Island and in 12.5 per cent of those in Rodrigues.

176. The types of anaemia in the population have yet to be established but dietary information suggests that there is considerable nutritional anaemia. Nutritional assessment of typical meals of young adults (18-24 years) in Mauritius indicated that their diet was markedly deficient in iron and to a lesser extent folic acid; deficiencies in either nutrient may lead to anaemia. Since the majority of children over one year are fed the family diet, it is probable that the diet of young children is also deficient in iron and folic acid. The incidence of low folic acid Hb levels was nearly twice as high in stunted as in "normal" children under five, suggesting that nutritional factors play an important role in the development of anaemia in this age group.

Overnutrition

177. Anthropometric data indicate overnutrition of some segments of the population. In a survey of persons aged 25 to 74 years, 39 per cent of females and 13 per cent of males were overweight (Body Mass Index = or > 25 for females, 27 for males). The incidence of overweight adults was highest in the 45 to 54 year old age group for both females and males. Amongst males, the Chinese had the highest tendency to be overweight; they also had a more centrally distributed pattern of body fat, as incited by waist-hip ratio.

178. In children and young adults overnutrition is not marked. Nutritional assessment of the diet of 18 to 24 year olds indicates that fat, carbohydrate and protein intakes in that age group are close to guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health in 1988 for the prevention of non-communicable diseases in Mauritius. The diet of older adults has not been assessed, although non-communicable diseases associated with overnutrition are recognized as being major causes of mortality and morbidity in the adult population.

Diabetes mellitus

179. Mauritius has amongst the highest rates of diabetes in the world. Of the population aged 45 and over, 23 per cent have been diagnosed as having diabetes and a further 22 per cent show impaired glucose tolerance. Thus in Mauritian adults aged 45 years and over, 1 in 2 persons has diabetes or is at risk of developing it. A major risk factor in the development of diabetes is obesity.

Hypertension

180. Hypertension is more common in Mauritius than in most other countries. Of the population aged 45 years and over, 1 in 4 persons show evidence of hypertension (systolic blood pressure = or > 160 mm Hg and diastolic blood pressure = or > 95 mm Hg). Hypertension was found to be associated with being overweight and with excessive alcohol intake. High sodium intake may play a role in the development of hypertension. A survey of young adults aged 18 to 24 indicates that sodium intake in that age group in Mauritius is twice that recommended by the Ministry of Health.

Cardiovascular disease

181. The commonest cause of mortality is heart disease. It accounted for 23 per cent of all deaths in Mauritius in 1990. Cerebrovascular disease was the second most common cause of mortality and accounted for 13 per cent of deaths in the same year. Mortality due to cardiovascular disease has been on the increase in the middle age group over the past 20 years, but may now have reached a high plateau. Electrocardiographic abnormalities, consistent with coronary disease, were found to be associated with both hypertension and impaired glucose tolerance.

182. Famines are non-existent in Mauritius, but for cases of emergency there is an adequate supply of stored foods at the Government Granary or the Agricultural Marketing Board. However, the country is prone to cyclones during part of the year and occasional droughts. An early warning system is in operation to advise the population to take all necessary precautions.

Availability of adequate food

183. Availability of marketing facilities generally correlates positively with good nutrition. This suggests that families having food markets within relatively easy reach have steadier access to cheaper foods, enjoy greater dietary diversification and consequently better nutritional status.

184. At the same time, adequate marketing and distribution facilities are essential to help farmers reach their production potential and to sell their surplus at a reasonable price.

185. The local distribution chain for the marketing of the bulk of locally produced fresh vegetables and fruit is controlled by a few middlemen through auctions. Most growers send their produce to the auction places which are located at a few places in the main towns, for example, at Port Louis, the capital or Vacoas. Sometimes the grower may sell to an agent who comes to the field to buy the produce. At the auctions, the auctioneers (some 30 are in operation throughout Mauritius) attract a number of potential bidders and auction the produce; the highest bidder takes the consignment. This traditional marketing system appears to be very efficient and the prices adequately reflect supply and demand, as well as the quality of the produce. There is a 75 to 85 per cent mark-up between wholesale and retail prices; all expenses taken into consideration, the retail price is about double the farmgate price.

Agricultural Marketing Board

186. The Agricultural Marketing Board, a parastatal agency under the Ministry of Agriculture, is the main government agency which controls the marketing of controlled products, potatoes, onions, garlic, turmeric, ginger, etc. It was set up in 1963 with the following objectives:

(a) To encourage the production locally of as much of the country's food requirements as is economically feasible;

(b) To ensure that agricultural marketing costs are at a minimum consistent with satisfying consumer demand;

(c) To limit price fluctuations in line with consumers' preferences;

(d) To utilize the Board's installations and resources with maximum commercial efficiency.

187. To attain these objectives, the Board provides producers of a selected number of priority products with support measures by way of guaranteed minimum prices and markets within the framework of a clearly defined marketing scheme. Marketing schemes are devised in such a way that the interests of producers as well as consumers are looked after. It has, thus, been possible to give producers remunerative prices, while maintaining retail prices at stable and reasonable levels.

188. The principle components of such schemes are outlined below:

A production target, where applicable, is decided after consultation with producers;

The Board, after taking into account the cost of production and a reasonable price margin for producers, recommends, for approval by the Ministry of Agriculture, a guaranteed minimum price for products satisfying prescribed grade specifications;

Producers may sell their surplus to the Board at the guaranteed price or otherwise are free to dispose of such products at prices not exceeding the fixed prices in certain cases;

Should the stock or production of particular controlled products be insufficient to supply the local market, the Board would resort to imports;

The Board also encourages exports of surplus controlled products at the best obtainable prices.

189. The Agricultural Marketing Board also operates a milk scheme whereby it collects some 5,000 litres of fresh milk per day from cow keepers throughout the island. The milk is pasteurized and sold in litre sachets.

190. In order to keep abreast of new consumer needs and with developments in production, the Board periodically reviews its marketing strategy.

Mauritius Meat Authority

191. The Mauritius Meat Authority, established in 1974, is the implementing agency for marketing of all livestock products other than milk and poultry. Amongst its activities the Authority:

(a) Purchases and imports livestock for slaughter;

(b) Markets meat, meat products and by-products of the slaughtering process;

(c) Controls and regulates the sale of meat and meat products;

(d) Licences persons and premises in connection with the slaughtering of animals for meat, and the preparation, processing, packing and marketing of meat; and

(e) With the approval of the Minister of Commerce and Industry fixes the price of meat and meat products.

State Trading Corporation

192. The State Trading Corporation, which started its operation in January 1983, is responsible for the importation of the two main staples of the country, namely rice and flour, and has recently extended its activities to some other food items, for example, fresh fruits. The main guiding principle of the Corporation is that it shall, in carrying out its objectives, operate on sound commercial principles. It thus gives due consideration to competitiveness, cost efficiency and profitability, operating within the framework of the Government's policy with regard to the interest of consumers.

193. Apart from the importation of ration rice, the Corporation imports some luxury or special rice with the objective of stabilizing prices and preventing wholesalers from making excessive profits.

194. The average annual quantities of foodstuffs marketed by the Corporation are as follows:

Ration rice	60 000 tonnes
Basmati rice	9 000 tonnes
Thai rice	4 000 tonnes
Other "luxury" rice	1 000 tonnes
Fresh fruits	125 tonnes
Flour	65 000 tonnes

195. The sales and distribution of the above-mentioned items are made through the following channels:

State Trading Corporation to wholesalers, retailers and consumers;

Wholesalers to retailers;

Retailers to consumers.

Bagged "ration rice", flour and luxury rice are mainly marketed through wholesalers and retailers. The Corporation has also put at the disposal of consumers since 1990 prepacked luxury rice and flour in units of 1 kg, 2.5 kg and 5 kg through its islandwide distribution network. Fresh fruits are sold and distributed to the consumers through sellers and supermarkets and shops.

196. Regarding other food products, the market is liberal; tradesmen (wholesalers) are free to import whatever foodstuff they wish through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and sell their products to a number of retailers throughout the island. The prices (wholesale and retail) of essential commodities (in fact most in daily use) are fixed by the Price Fixing Board, which allows a reasonable margin of profit to the wholesalers and retailers.

Government measures to guarantee access to adequate food for the vulnerable groups

197. It being agreed that children and old people especially from the poor sections of the population constitute vulnerable groups, the Government has taken a number of steps to encourage action towards the relief of such vulnerable groups.

198. Subsidies were introduced at a time when the economic situation was most alarming and had as their objective the provision of social relief to the whole population. With the economic development and progress registered during the past decade, there has been significant improvement in the standard of living and purchasing power of the population. The Government therefore decided that there was no necessity to subsidize at high cost the price of commodities, as the majority of the population could afford to pay the full price. The subsidies were accordingly removed as from May 1993. However, Government is providing a rice and flour allowance of Rs 25 monthly to every needy person and to every dependant of a beneficiary. The amount disbursed for this allowance is Rs 2.5 million since it is estimated that there are around 100,000 beneficiaries.

199. Regarding external food aid, Mauritius benefited from such aid long ago from various donors but now that the country is considered as being in the middle-income group, with a GNP per capita of about US$ 3,000, it does not benefit from it any more.

200. The World Food Programme (WFP) has been supporting a school feeding project since 1970, with the following objectives:

(a) To assist in the improvement and maintenance of good health among primary school children by providing a mid-day snack consisting of bread, milk, cheese, dried fruit and cocoa powder;

(b) To promote nutrition education in the upper standard of the primary cycle.

Emphasis was placed on infant school feeding programmes because nutrition at this stage is crucial to the full development of a child's intellectual as well as physical capacity.

201. It is evident from the considerable decrease in the mortality rate for children, from 25.6 per thousand in 1983 to 18.2 per thousand in 1993, as well as the decrease in the number of diseases due to malnutrition or undernutrition, that the school feeding project has contributed in a large measure to the improvement in the nutritional status of children. WFP assistance has also played a medically preventive role through the free distribution of milk and protein supplements to expectant and nursing women.

202. In 1989 a WFP evaluation mission visited Mauritius to carry out an evaluation of ongoing WFP projects in Mauritius and make recommendations for the future orientation and scope of WFP aid to the country. Unfortunately, the mission recommended a gradual phasing out over a period of six years of WFP support to the school feeding project and that the Government take over by 1995.

203. The Government has, inter alia, prepared a plan of action for the survival and development of children with the collaboration of the relevant ministries and agencies. The main objectives of the Plan of Action will be to reduce infant mortality, improve child health and ensure overall development of the child. The Government is currently operating a primary-school feeding programme and is considering the introduction of a full school meal on a cost-sharing basis. In addition, it will set up training kitchens in the main women's centres to demonstrate the preparation of nutritive and balanced meals to women. The Ministry of Women's Rights, Family Welfare and Child Development is already taking several steps for the welfare of the family as a whole and is active in the field. Mauritius has a well developed welfare system and is caring for its old people, women and other vulnerable groups. The provision of free education, free health services, non-contributory old-age pensions, as well as the payment of disability, unemployment and other benefits, and commitment to the objective of full employment, are all part of the welfare system. However government policy is to move away from a generalized system of assistance, which has proved to be wasteful, to one which is direct and in keeping with policy objectives. In that context indicators are developed to keep track of happenings in the social scene, which includes collection and analysis of pertinent information at the micro level.

Government measures and strategy towards food production, conservation and distribution

204. The Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources is responsible for the planning and implementation of the Government's agricultural development policies and for the conservation and exploitation of natural resources. To implement such policies, the Ministry ensures that the appropriate infrastructure and necessary support measures are made available through several institutions, each one in its own sector, having as principal objective the development of agriculture and its economy. The private sector is very closely associated with agricultural development through the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture, which represents the farming community, mainly large planters and sugar millers.

205. Considering that sugar-cane occupies 92 per cent of arable land in Mauritius, and that land is a scarce commodity, government policy has, in recent years, been to maintain sugar production at the level attained, i.e. 650,000 tonnes yearly, to activate increase in sugar productivity and to encourage agricultural diversification, particularly in rotational and sugar-cane interlines for local needs and for exports.

206. The central policy of the programme of utilizing interline and rotational sugar-cane lands is also to revive agricultural production by small producers at village level, who would be encouraged to group themselves into cooperatives and to organize themselves on a collective basis for the storage of products, use of pasture land and marketing. The Government is also committed to exploring the possibilities of introducing light mechanization and intermediate technology to render working conditions less cumbersome for agricultural workers.

207. On the way towards further encouraging agricultural diversification, the Ministry of Agriculture has since 1983 initiated a range of policies for boosting food-crop and livestock production (milk and meat) in order gradually to attain food security and self sufficiency. The programme is aimed at self sufficiency in a selected range of food crops, development of the milk and meat industry to reduce the country's dependence on imports of those products, development and optimization of land productivity and setting up a framework of marketing facilities and pricing policies to encourage producers with a fair return for their efforts coupled with a reasonable sense of security. The basic idea underlying the food production policy is self reliance aimed at producing more of what is consumed, the intention being to reduce the heavy drain in foreign exchange spent on the importation of foodstuffs.

208. Under the Prime Minister's derocking scheme, the Government has embarked on a programme to derock some 50,000 hectares of small planters' lands with a view to increase the acreage available for cultivation and to improve soil texture, thereby allowing increased yields, and to prepare the fields for mechanization operations. It is expected that land belonging to small planters will be grouped into more viable units such as land area management units (LAMU) for land development and management purposes.

209. Irrigation is playing an increasingly important role in boosting national agricultural production and is expected to contribute significantly in increasing both sugar production and agricultural diversification. The beneficial effects of irrigation will be especially felt in the northern and western parts of Mauritius where droughts are more severe; some 17,000 hectares of land are presently under irrigation and future irrigation projects are intended to cover another 31,000 hectares.

210. The development and control of irrigation in Mauritius has been entrusted to the Irrigation Authority, a parastatal body working under the aegis of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

211. In the food-crop sector, emphasis has also been laid on the mechanization of agriculture to overcome an increasing labour shortage. Several incentives have been given for the development of high value crops through the provision of subsidized seeds and planting material, proper research advice and extension, a freight rebate scheme for the exportation of exotic fruits and vegetables, credit and loans made available at concessionary rates by the Development Bank of Mauritius and support to a major national fruit fly project to control fruit flies, which present a major constraint to fruit production. Encouragement is also being given to the importation of tissue culture material to speed up importation of certified planting material and efforts will continue to tap research progress in biotechnology and modern techniques of agricultural production. Research will concentrate on the removal of constraints to efficient agricultural production and new crops will be assessed for their suitability for local and export purposes.

212. Similarly, in the livestock sector, existing efforts have been consolidated to sustain productivity through the provision of incentives and facilities for improved production and productivity. In that context, several measures have been taken to boost livestock production, such as free veterinary and artificial insemination services, provision of day-old chicks at subsidized prices, subsidized livestock feed from the Government Livestock Feed Factory, price support to producers of milk and beef through a milk and meat marketing scheme, a cash incentive scheme to encourage breeders to increase their herds. Improved breeds of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and rabbits are imported, assessed and sold periodically to farmers. Deer farming, successfully carried out by sugar estates and large landowners grouped into cooperatives, has been encouraged by the Government and appropriate facilities, such as animal disease control and purchase of duty-free equipment, have been provided.

213. In the fisheries sector, government policy aims at ensuring an adequate and regular supply of fish and fish products to meet domestic needs and to generate a surplus for exports. Through continued emphasis on high value exports, the fisheries development strategy also aims at increased export earnings. The following measures have been taken to achieve the objectives of increasing fish supply and export earnings in a sustainable manner:

Exploitation of off-lagoon resources, including deep sea fisheries and marine shrimps and small pelagic fish in the banks;

Further development of the export oriented tuna industry and aquaculture, especially marine shrimps;

Provision of incentives to fishermen especially credit facilities and direct support (e.g. bad weather allowance, boats, etc.) and appropriate pricing and marketing strategies;

Enforcement of management, protection and conservation of marine living resources, including a licensing system for fishing vessels;

Training of fishermen in advanced fishing techniques, a training policy aimed at upgrading skills of registered fishermen in off-reef fishing, thereby enlarging their employment opportunities;

Development of research aimed at the development and management of fisheries for increased and sustainable production. Activities are centred around priority issues, such as surveys for new fishing grounds, development of improved fishing techniques, fish stock assessment and aquaculture.

214. Post-harvest losses generally start on the standing crop and build up during handling, marketing or storage. Losses may also be due to diseases and pests attacking the standing crop or after harvest during manipulation of the harvested produce. Despite precautionary measures taken to prevent damage due to pests and diseases, losses cannot be avoided. While fungi and insect pests are the main devastating agents of harvested produce, cosmopolitan pests and rats are considered to be the main devastators of stored products like rice and flour.

215. Post-harvest losses have not been accurately assessed but it is generally agreed that such losses amount to some 35 per cent of the crop yields. Improvements in post-harvest management can therefore significantly reduce food losses and increase overall food availability as the result of lower costs of production. Whenever there is a glut of agricultural produce on the market, considerable losses occur because the excess is destroyed in the field by the farmer in his efforts to stabilize producer and consumer prices. Some food processing/food canning facilities already exist in the private sector to mop up the increased production. Modern methods used to decrease post-harvest losses include sound crop management, sorting, processing and/or post-harvest treatment of produce and appropriate storage at farm or central level, for example, at the Agricultural Marketing Board.

216. Storage methods focus mainly on the use of cold treatments and processing/canning procedures. The country has neither experimented with nor adopted modern techniques of storage, such as irradiation or chemical processing. However some food processing (mainly steaming/canning) is being carried out by the private sector on perishables to enhance the keeping qualities of the harvested produce.

217. The measures to be taken to improve methods of conservation are as follows:

(i) Marketing agencies need to collect and publicize market information to help coordinate production and consumption;

(ii) There is need for initiation and enforcement of a grading system for produce, with a built-in system of incentives for quality, as long as consumers are prepared to pay a premium for quality;

(iii) It is important to encourage industrial processing technologies that build convenience into fresh products;

(iv) Commercial units engaged in post-harvest handling must be encouraged, particularly when they are meant to service small producers;

(v) Emphasis must be placed on the nutritive value of foods rather than aesthetic considerations;

(vi) More consideration needs to be given to pesticide usage and pesticide residues in food;

(vii) Research should henceforth emphasize post-harvest performance and requirements of commodities, and not just the field production aspects.

Nutrition education

218. The Government is creating awareness through the incorporation of nutrition education in the school curriculum and together with the Ministry of Health, it is taking adequate precautions to ensure that children, especially schoolchildren, are adequately fed, as proper feeding stimulates the intelligence of the child. In parallel with this development, health infrastructures are being modernized and upgraded for the well-being of the population at large; the decrease in the infant mortality rate and the longer life expectancy of the male and female population are sufficient indicators of overall improvement of the population, both socially and economically.

219. Training on nutritional or agricultural problems is always obtainable at the Faculties of Medicine or Agriculture in the universities of the region. In Mauritius, the Ministry of Health, in cooperation with other ministries, has long been involved in problems of nutritional health and a unit is available at the Ministry of Health to monitor the nutritional status of the population. Training can be made available to staff of similar institutions from the other Preferential Trade Agreement countries. A food policy unit has recently been created at the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. It has an interministerial and multisectoral steering committee which has the mandate to look at issues that affect food production, nutritional status and health, quality of food supplies, quality of food imports, local food manufacturing, food accessibility and food quality control, and to make recommendations to the Government.

220. The Ministry of Education is developing health education (Education for life) with a nutrition component for children at three levels. The Institute of Education trains teachers in home economics and nutrition and the curriculum centre prepares pedagogical materials.

221. The Ministry of Education has also embarked on a series of sensitization campaigns on nutrition education at different levels: parents, teaching and non-teaching staff at the primary level. It is proposed in the short term to set up health clubs on a pilot basis in eight primary schools in deprived areas. The project will involve the participation of the community, parents, "forces vives", NGOs, medical and paramedical resource persons. (Please refer to annex VIII for the Food Policy Unit).

Paragraph 3 (a) of the guidelines

Detailed statistical information about the housing situation in Mauritius

222. The latest housing census, which is dated 1990, showed that there were 223,821 housing units in the State of Mauritius, out of which 216,011 were in the island of Mauritius.

223. The urban areas (i.e the five statutory towns) account for 43.0 per cent of the housing stock. But when the peri-urban areas are reckoned with, the percentage of housing units in the urban and peri-urban zones goes up to 51.6 per cent of total housing.

224. Of the 216,011 housing units counted in the census for the island of Mauritius, 208,163 were occupied and provided accommodation for a population of 1,014,205 grouped into 229,367 households. The excess of households over housing units gives an indication of the shortage of housing units, which amounted to 13,356. It would however be more realistic to put the shortfall at 20,000 dwellings, when allowance is made for vacancy rate (3 per cent), urbanization pressure, social mobility and spatial inequalities.

225. The 1990 housing census data show that there were 7,810 housing units in Rodrigues, of which 7,221 were occupied. The number of households amounted to 7,268 and the population stood at 33,883.

Paragraph 3 (b) of the guidelines

226. No official figure is available but it is estimated that about 150 persons are homeless. They comprise "clochards" mainly, for whom an "abri de nuit" has recently been inaugurated by Abbé Pierre in a suburb of Port Louis, the capital city. This shelter project jointly implemented by the Ministry of Social Security, the Diocese of Port Louis, and the Abbé Pierre Foundation, accommodates 50 persons. Other similar projects will be implemented by the Ministry of Housing Lands and Town and Country Planning in collaboration with the Diocese of Port Louis and the Abbé Pierre Foundation.

Building characteristics

227. Of the 200,621 buildings counted in the 1990 housing census for the island of Mauritius, residential buildings (exclusive of 2,202 detached rooms

used by part of a household) amounted to 177,711, of which 6,666 were partly residential. The number of buildings used wholly as one housing unit stood at 146,632, representing 82.5 per cent of residential buildings. There were 14,044 blocks of flats and semi-detached houses, representing 7.9 per cent of the total housing stock. Another 5.7 per cent of residential buildings were buildings designed as one housing unit but crudely subdivided into smaller housing units.

Residential building height and building materials

228. Of the residential (including partly residential) buildings 88.1 per cent were constructed on one floor, while another 11.5 per cent were one-storeyed buildings (i.e. ground plus one floor). According to the 1990 housing census, 71.9 per cent of the residential buildings had concrete walls and roofs and 16.9 per cent were built of wood and/or iron.

Age of residential buildings

229. As at 1990, some 56 per cent of existing residential and partly residential buildings were built after 1975. The share of the housing stock built between 1960 and 1974 amounted to around 24 per cent, and 11 per cent predated 1960.

Basic household amenities

230. The 1990 census shows that the island of Mauritius is well provided with basic infrastructure.

231. In that year, 224,134 households had electricity - 97.7 per cent of total households. This contrasts with 93.5 per cent in 1983 and 70.8 per cent in 1972.

232. Of the total of 229,367 households, 220,916 had piped water - 96.3 per cent. Of these, 59.6 per cent had piped water inside the housing units, 34.9 per cent outside the house but on the premises and 5.5 per cent were making use of public fountains. The number of households with piped water within the house amounted to 57.45 per cent of total households, in contrast with 40.6 per cent in 1983 and 27.2 per cent in 1972, showing therefore a marked tendency towards supply within the dwelling.

233. The number of households with bathrooms inside the dwelling amounted to 113,157, or 49.3 per cent of total households. This is a marked improvement over the past two decades, with only 36.3 per cent of total households in 1983 and 21.4 per cent in 1972 having bathing facilities inside the housing unit. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that in 1990 there were still 106,008 households, 46.2 per cent of total households with bathing facilities outside the house and another 10,193, 4.5 per cent, with no bathroom (although the latter figure compares with 14 per cent of households with no bathroom in 1983).

234. In the case of toilet facilities, the number of households with flush toilets connected either to the sewerage system or to an absorption pit or

septic tank amounted to 147,928, representing 64.55 per cent of total households. This compares favourably with the situation in 1983, when only 48.9 per cent of total households had a flush toilet, and in 1972 (with 33.5 per cent). On the other hand, the number of households using a pit latrine declined steadily from 58.0 per cent of total households in 1972 to 44.5 per cent in 1983 and to 35.0 per cent in 1990. The use of flush toilets is more predominant in the urban areas than in the rural zones. In 1990, some 83.6 per cent of households in the five townships had a flush toilet, compared with 50.4 per cent in the rural areas.

235. There has been over the past two decades a marked tendency towards providing kitchen facilities within the house. For the island of Mauritius, the share of total households with inside kitchen facilities rose from 37.2 per cent in 1972 to 50.5 per cent in 1983 and to 66.1 per cent in 1990. The share of households with inside kitchen facilities was higher in the urban areas than in the rural zones in 1990. In effect, 80.3 per cent of urban households had inside cooking facilities, as compared with 55.5 per cent of rural households.

236. There has also been a change in the type of fuel used for cooking. In 1990, some 25.4 per cent of households in the island of Mauritius used wood or charcoal as principal fuel for cooking, as compared with 53.7 per cent in 1983 and 62.3 per cent in 1972. In contrast, the number of households using kerosene increased from 31.9 per cent of total households in 1972 to 35.4 per cent in 1983, but fell to 21.8 per cent in 1990. Households using gas or electricity increased steadily from 4.6 per cent of total households in 1972 to 10.5 per cent in 1983 and to 52.6 per cent in 1990. There has in effect been a substantial increase in the consumption of gas as the principal source of fuel for cooking, with gas alone accounting for cooking fuel for 51.1 per cent of households. The use of gas and electricity is more predominant in the urban areas, with 68.55 per cent of urban households making use of that type of energy for cooking, as opposed to 40.9 per cent of rural households.

237. The table below gives a summary of the basic amenities and the degree of access of households to them.

		1972	1983	1990
Households with electricity	No.	106 817	184 903	224 134
	%	70.8	93.5	97.7
Water supply inside house	No.	41 029	80 221	131 689
	%	22.7	40.6	57.4
Flush toilets	No.	50 504	98 688	147 928
	%	33.5	48.9	64.5
Inside bathing facilities	No.	32 200	71 826	113 157
	%	21.4	36.3	49.3
Attached kitchens	No.	56 025	99 732	151 534
	%	37.2	50.5	66.1
Electricity/gas for cooking	No.	6 963	20 731	120 656
	%	4.6	10.5	52.6

Paragraph 3 (b) (iii) of the guidelines

238. The number of persons currently classified as living in "illegal" settlements or housing is as follows:

1,900 households x 4.5 average household size	=	8,550 persons on state lands in the process of regularization
400 households x 4.5 average household size	=	1,800 persons on state lands being investigated

Note: There are no cases of squatting on private lands.

Paragraph 3 (b) (iv) of the guidelines

239. About 100 squatter families, i.e. around 450 persons, have been evicted over the past five years.

Paragraph 3 (b) (v) of the guidelines

240. The table below shows that, at today's cost and with the present incentives and down-payment requirements (10 per cent of sale value), if land and infrastructure costs are subsidized, households earning between Rs 4,000 and 10,000 monthly can afford a housing unit ranging from 70m^2 to 115m^2, on the assumption that one third of salary is spent on housing.

Income	Repay-ment	Interest	Years	Present value	Grant	Down-payment	Total	Construction cost	House size
Rs	Rs	% p.a.	No.	Rs	Rs	Rs	Rs	Rs/m^2	m^2
4 000	1 333	6.5	20	180 000	30 000	23 000	233 000	3 340	70
5 000	1 667	6.5	20	224 000	30 000	28 000	282 000	3 340	84
6 000	2 000	10.0	20	207 000		23 000	230 000	3 340	70
7 000	2 333	10.0	20	242 000		27 000	269 000	3 240	81
8 000	2 667	10.0	20	276 000		31 000	307 000	3 340	92
9 000	3 000	10.0	20	311 000		35 000	346 000	3 340	104
10 000	3 333	10.0	20	345 000		38 000	383 000	3 340	115

241. The average monthly income per household is Rs 6,250. The median monthly income per household is Rs 4,750.

Paragraph 3 (b) (vi) of the guidelines

242. Waiting lists for obtaining accommodation stand at about 10,000 households. The waiting time varies widely, no average has been worked out so far. To decrease the lists, a government housing construction programme is being implemented through the National Housing Development Company. An average of 2,500 units are being constructed yearly since the start of the programme in 1991.

243. No temporary housing scheme exists as such; however, homeless cyclone refugees numbering some 60 families have been housed in temporary shelters after the passage of cyclone Hollanda in February 1994.

Paragraph 3 (b) (vii) of the guidelines

244. Average household size has shown a constant decrease during the past 20 years. From 5.32 persons per household in 1972, the size decreased to 4.89 in 1983 and further to 4.45 in 1990.

Private households by tenure 1972-1990

Year		Total	Owner	Tenant/sub-tenant	Free	Other/not stated
1972	No.	149 499	79 385	48 605	20 412	1 097
	%	100.0	53.1	32.5	13.7	0.7
1983	No.	197 689	130 417	36 463	30 396	413
	%	100.0	66.0	18.4	15.4	0.2
1990	No.	229 447	173 092	35 764	20 326	265
	%	100.0	75.4	15.6	8.9	0.1

Paragraph 3 (c) (i) to (xi) of the guidelines

245. With respect to the existence of any laws affecting the realization of the right to housing, the following information is provided:

(i) Legislation which gives substance to the right to housing in terms of defining the content of this right: None;

(ii) Legislation such as housing acts, homeless person acts, municipal corporation acts, etc.: None;

(iii) Legislation relevant to land use, land distribution; land allocation, land zoning, land ceilings, expropriations including provisions for compensation; land planning, including procedures for community participation: See copy of Town and Country Planning Act annexed*;

(iv) Legislation concerning the rights of tenants to security of tenure, to protection from eviction; to housing finance and rental control (or subsidy), housing affordability, etc: See copy of Landlord and Tenant Act contained in annex II*;

(v) Legislation concerning building codes, building regulations and standards and the provision of infrastructure: See copy of Building Regulations contained in annex III*;

(vi) Legislation prohibiting any and all forms of discrimination in the housing sector, including groups not traditionally protected: None;

(vii) Legislation prohibiting any form of eviction: None;

(viii) Any legislative repeal or reform of existing laws which detracts from the fulfilment of the right to housing: None;

(ix) Legislation restricting speculation on housing or property, particularly when such speculation has a negative impact on the fulfilment of housing rights for all sectors of society: None;

(x) Legislative measures conferring legal title to those living in the "illegal" sector: None;

(xi) Legislation concerning environmental planning and health in housing and human settlements: There is no legislation as such but issues concerning environmental planning and health are covered in the Town and Country Planning Act, the Health Acts and the recently proclaimed Environment Protection Act.

Paragraph 3 (d) (i) and (ii) of the guidelines

246. Various public sector housing programmes have been formulated and implemented since the 1960s. The details are given below.

Post-cyclone rehousing

247. Since the substantial damage caused to the housing stock by two successive cyclones in 1960, shelter provision has been a sensitive issue. The housing sector has been afforded high priority in the past three decades, although public sector attitude has fluctuated within the context of the times at which changes had occurred.

248. Government involvement in the sector started in 1960, responding to the overnight deficiency in the stock caused by cyclones Alix and Carol. As most victims were not landowners, the decision had to be taken to build housing estates. In the period 1961-1970, 14,000 houses were built by the public sector at a highly subsidized rate, of which some 6,000 were erected on estates in urban areas and another 3,000 on estates in rural zones. Another 4,000 were built on private sites, while the rest were smaller units for small families.

249. No sooner was the programme completed than in 1975 another cyclone struck the island, this time causing damage to some 13,000 housing units. In the period 1975-1980, the Government embarked on a programme for 10,000 units, entrusting 7,000 to the Central Housing Authority (CHA), 2,000 to the Mauritius Housing Corporation (MHC), 600 to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund (SILWF) and another 600 to be dealt with with the assistance of the European Development Fund. The programme faced considerable difficulty, with delays in land acquisition, the untimely programming of infrastructure and escalating building costs. As with the previous programme, repayment terms were fairly generous, with land and infrastructure costs being subsidized fully, and building costs recovered at low interest rates over a 40-year repayment period.

Cost recovery housing projects in the 1980s

250. By the late 1970s it became increasingly clear that the policy of high subsidy could not be stretched unduly, and when cyclone Claudette hit the island at Christmas 1979, damaging some 2,500 dwellings, the Government response was not the same as to previous disasters. With pressure from such lending agencies as the World Bank, the Government decided to view housing as a continuing programme rather than emergency action-based, and started to envisage the concept of affordability and full cost recovery. A survey was carried out in early 1980 to test the acceptance of core housing and sites and services. Response was positive and the Government embarked on a European Development Fund-financed sites and services project and building loan for some 500 beneficiaries and on a World Bank package for, inter alia, the implementation of the first phase La Tour Koenig sites and services and core housing project, that would benefit some 600 households.

251. After the implementation of the La Tour Koenig project, the Government's role as an active implementor in the sector was phased out until 1990. In the period 1984-1990, except for some minor projects by the CHA (rehousing of La Butte landslide victims) and the MHC under previous commitments, the Government did not propose any major public sector construction project.

Government policies in the late 1980s

252. A gradual change in policy started in 1986, with emphasis on (a) improvement in the conditions of sugar camp dwellers; (b) quality of life; and (c) encouragement of home ownership.

253. The sugar estates were asked to give consideration to the parcelling out of land into small plots for their workers, with plot servicing at the expense of the public sector, land transfer exempt from tax and the availability of part grant and part soft loan to meet building costs.

254. The second emphasis was on the quality of life, and provision was made for the rehabilitation of existing CHA estates in need of infrastructure upgrading.

255. Home ownership was also encouraged, with exemption on registration duties for first buyers of residential land, soft loans with an element of grant from the MHC and facilities for CHA and SILWF residents in estates built prior to 1976 to become owners with only a small final payment. The latter would further be eligible for soft loans for the rehabilitation of their dwellings.

256. Two important elements need to be highlighted here. First, whilst the major 1960 cyclone Carol had badly damaged 40,000 houses and the 1975 cyclone Gervaise damaged 13,000 houses, only some 2,500 units were damaged by the February 1994 cyclone Hollanda. These figures clearly demonstrate that the successive major cyclones affected fewer and fewer houses because of the improvements in the structural soundness brought to the housing stock and housing quality in general. Second, whilst in 1968 the per capita income of

the country was Rs 14,046, in 1993 it stood at Rs 51,687. This indicates, inter alia, that the ability to invest in a shelter by wage earners has increased substantially over the last 15 years, so much so that better housing schemes than those traditionally undertaken by the former Central Housing Authority can now be planned, implemented and made affordable to the low-income categories.

Housing development certificates

257. In 1989, the Government took the view that because of the shortage of manpower and materials in the construction sector, the magnitude of housing demand and the scarcity of land resources, any ambitious housing programme would have to concentrate on medium-rise buildings and to make use of the latest building technologies in order to keep prices down. In an effort to shift building contractors and investors in realty to the housing sector, the Government decided to deliver Housing Development Certificates (HDCs) to building companies and housing promoters wishing to provide flats for lower and middle income groups. Companies holding HDCs were to benefit from reduced corporate tax, exemption from income tax for eight years, exemption from import duty and import levy on construction equipment and a series of building materials, part remission on registration duty and land conversion tax on land acquisition, and loans from the Development Bank of Mauritius and the Mauritius Housing Corporation.

258. To date, 59 applications for HDCs have been received, of which 18 HDCs have been granted for projects involving the construction of some 2,500 units. Letters of intent have been issued to another 18 applicant companies with projects totalling around 1,000 units. Applications not yet processed amount to 23, representing proposals for the construction of 2,900 units.

259. It is to be observed that no application has been received for projects targeting low income groups. The majority of applications relate to dwellings aimed at upper middle and middle income categories, with a minimum provision aimed at the lower middle income group.

The "Un toit pour chaque famille" policy

260. The 1990/1991 budget re-emphasized Government commitments to the plight of the lower income groups within the framework of the ambitious programme of "Un toit pour chaque famille". In November 1990, a task force on housing was set up, its terms of reference being to examine the housing sector and to draw up a master plan for housing development, with proposals for different categories of house seekers, especially the low-income and middle-income groups. The Task Force proposed in April 1991 a national housing programme for the construction of 73,000 housing units in the period 1991-2000. It recommended that initially 40 per cent of funds for housing should be devoted to lower income groups and that projects should be based on the neighbourhood concept, with facilities for community development and essential services, and located in the vicinity of employment centres. It also recommended the launching of pilot projects with particular attention to multi-storeyed

apartment buildings, with the object of assessing their acceptability and educating Mauritians in adapting to life in high-rise apartments. Among the innovations which the Task Force suggested were the use of the latest building technology, an invitation to foreign construction companies with experience in our climatic conditions to take part in our construction programme and the provision of support to local contractors intent on adopting new building technology.

261. In 1992, a private company, the National Housing Development Company Ltd. (NHDC) was set up to act as the executive arm of the Government in the housing sector. It was provided with Rs 200 million as seed capital to enable it to embark on a series of large-scale projects for low- and middle-income groups, with the Government bearing the cost of land and basic on-site and off-site infrastructure (water, sewerage, roads and electricity).

262. The NHDC has to date built 2,030 housing units in three-storeyed blocks and will complete during the course of the year (1994) another 1,360 units. The housing units are meant primarily for the income groups drawing from Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000, and from Rs 4,000 to Rs 6,000 per month.

263. It should be observed here that to further facilitate access to NHDC housing, the Government decided in February 1994 to lower down-payments as follows:

Salary	Down-payment
Less than Rs 4 000	Rs 5 000
Rs 4 000 to Rs 6 000	5 per cent of housing unit sale price
More than Rs 6 000	10 per cent of housing unit sale price

The Government has further reviewed loan repayment facilities from the monthly equated instalments to the progressive repayment system for beneficiaries drawing less than Rs 6,000 monthly.

264. Apart from the national housing programme assigned to the NHDC, the Government has allocated, during the period 1984-1993, 1,340 building site leases to enable very low-income people to build their own individual houses.

265. It should be brought up also that by December 1991, the Government had approved 1,298 leases to squatters, regularizing thereby their illegal occupation of State lands.

Measures taken to release unutilized, under-utilized or mis-utilized land

266. The National Physical Development Plan recently approved by the Government contains strategies for the rational use of all lands within the territory of Mauritius and the process of translating these strategies into regional and local plans is well advanced.

Paragraph 3 (d) (iv) of the guidelines

Financial measures taken by the State

267. The following incentives are given by the Mauritius Housing Corporation to individual land owners to construct on their own, or to non-owners for purchase of NHDC units:

(i) Interest rates of 6.5 per cent for those earning less than Rs 6,000 (subsidized by the Government); 10 per cent for those earning from Rs 6,001 to Rs 10,000;

(ii) 12.5 per cent for those earning above Rs 10,000;

(iii) A grant of 20 per cent of the amount of the loan up to Rs 30,000 for those earning less than Rs 6,000;

(iv) A nominal registration fee of only Rs 300 is payable instead of the normal rate of 2.475 per cent of the housing unit value.

268. The cost of land and infrastructure is borne by the Government for NHDC housing.

269. The Housing Division capital budget amounts to 6.2 per cent of the national budget in the financial year 1994-1995. The funds provided from the Ministry of Finance budget for housing subsidy as a percentage of the national budget amount to 2 per cent.

Paragraph 3 (d) (v) of the guidelines

270. No international assistance is available for housing projects (see para. 275 below).

Paragraph 3 (d) (vi) of the guidelines

For measures taken to encourage the development of small and intermediate urban centres, especially at the rural level, see paragraph 266 above.

Paragraph 3 (d) (vii) of the guidelines

271. Displaced persons are either paid compensation for their properties or offered alternative sites for their rehousing.

Paragraph 3 (e) of the guidelines

272. There have been no changes in national policies, laws and practices negatively affecting the right to adequate housing.

Paragraph 4 of the guidelines

273. The major difficulties encountered in the realization of the new low-income housing programme are related to the provision of basic

infrastructure, i.e. electricity, water, roads and sewerage, concurrently with the housing units. The cost of the offsite works in respect of water and sewerage are particularly high. About 30 per cent of housing project value is absorbed by those infrastructure services.

274. Another difficulty relates to the existing housing estates. The Government is not only constructing new units for house seekers but is also rehabilitating existing housing estates in order to provide them with basic facilities such as water and sewerage. In fact, the project consists of upgrading these services where they are deficient or constructing new systems where they are non-existent. An average of Rs 50m are disbursed yearly on such projects by the Government.

Paragraph 5 of the guidelines

275. If international assistance is obtained for major infrastructure and other services projects, no such assistance is available in the field of housing per se on the premise that the country does not qualify for international finance.

Article 12

Paragraph 1 of the guidelines

276. Please refer to Part One of the document submitted to the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 1994.

Paragraph 2 of the guidelines

277. A national health policy does exist. The WHO primary health care approach has been adopted as part of the health policy of the country. Measures taken to implement primary health care are as follows:

(a) Better distribution facilities across the country, with even the remotest areas having access to at least primary health care; at present 26 area health centres and 106 community health centres are catering for the needs of the population in primary health care;

(b) Reducing morbidity and mortality caused by infections and parasitic diseases like AIDS;

(c) Strengthening immunization programmes, with 100 per cent coverage by the year 2000;

(d) Reducing the infant mortality rate to about 15 per 1,000 live births (at present the rate is 20 per 1,000 live births);

(e) Population growth is under control;

(f) Health promotion programmes are being intensified;

(g) Community participation is being strengthened.

Paragraph 3 of the guidelines

278. The percentage of GNP spent on health is as follows for various years since 1985:

1985	1.8
1987	1.75
1991	2.0
1993	3.62

and the percentage of health expenditure spent on primary health care:

1986	8.6
1988	10.0
1991	10.0
1993	10.5 (estimates)

Paragraph 4 of the guidelines (indicators as defined by WHO)

(a) Infant mortality rate

279. Refer to annex IX*.

(b) Population access to safe water

280. Refer to annexes X and XI*.

(c) Population access to adequate excreta disposal facilities

281. Refer to annexes XII and XIII*.

(d) Infants immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, poliomyelitis and tuberculosis

282. Refer to annex XIV*.

(e) Life expectancy

283. Refer to annex XV*.

Paragraph 4 (f) of the guidelines

Access for treatment of common diseases and injuries

284. The proportion of the population having access to trained personnel for the treatment of common diseases and injuries, with regular supply of at least 20 essential drugs, within one hour's walk or travel is over 99 per cent. (The term "trained personnel" used in this and the following sections comprises doctors, fully qualified nurses and midwives.)

Paragraph 4 (g) of the guidelines

Pregnant women having access to trained personnel

285. The proportion of pregnant women having access to trained personnel during pregnancy is estimated to be 95 per cent, if trained personnel in both the public and private sectors are taken into consideration.

286. The proportion of women attended by trained personnel during delivery is given in the table below and relates to the year 1992.

Place of delivery	Number	% of total deliveries
At home attended by staff of the Ministry of Health	21	0.1
At Health Centre	21	0.1
At Government Hospital	18 626	82.6
In private clinics	3 001	13.4
Total attended by trained personnel	20 210	96.2
Not attended by trained personnel	787	3.8
Grand total	22 456	100.0

287. Details of the maternal mortality rate in the Island of Mauritius in 1992 are given in the following table.

Maternal mortality

Cause of death	Number of deaths	Rate per 100,000 live births
Complication of abortion	4	18.0
Toxaemia of pregnancy	2	9.0
Disruption of a caesarian wound	1	4.5
Complications from forceps delivery	1	4.5
Cardiovascular condition	1	4.5
Total	9	40.6

There was only one maternal death in the Island of Rodrigues in 1992.

Paragraph 4 (h) of the guidelines

288. Proportion of infants having access to trained personnel for care was over 99 per cent.

Paragraph 5 of the guidelines

289. The "vulnerable" groups may be categorized as follows:

Infants and children;

Pregnant women;

Battered wives;

Physically and mentally handicapped persons;

Mentally ill persons;

Drug addicts/alcoholics;

The elderly;

Persons having AIDS.

Worse off areas

(i) Infant mortality rate: Moka

290. The geographical area regarded as being worse off is the district of Moka with an infant mortality rate of 30.0 per thousand live births as compared to the figure of 19.6 per thousand live births for the whole island during the year 1993.

(ii) Still-births: Riviere du Rempart district

291. The still-birth rate registered in the Island in 1993 was 15.1 per thousand total births. The distribution by district reveals that the lowest rate was that of Savanne (12.0), while the highest 20.7 was that of Riviere du Rempart.

(iii) Infant mortality rate and still birth rate: Rodrigues

292. The infant mortality rate for Rodrigues is 21.1 compared to 19.6 per thousand live births in Mauritius, whereas the still-birth rate in Rodrigues is 6.0 compared to 15.1 per thousand total births in Mauritius.

Paragraph 5 (a) of the guidelines

293. The rapid economic development in Mauritius has led to a breakdown of the extended family structure with changes in the traditional gender roles, values and behaviour patterns. Children of working parents are having to depend more

on themselves, while husbands are having to redefine their roles as "head of the family". In the recent past, it has been observed that both the number and types of crimes, such as child abuse, rape and delinquency, associated with drug addiction and prostitution have increased, as have the number of suicide and abortion cases. Although these problems cannot be attributed solely to the rapid economic development, it is said that in the process of development the two are synergic.

Paragraphs 5 (b) to (e) of the guidelines

Infants and children

294. Mauritius was among the first countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in September 1990.

295. The Ministry of Women's Rights and Family Welfare in collaboration with other ministries such as those of Education and Health, and with the assistance of international non-governmental organizations, is presently working on national programmes of action to implement the commitments undertaken in the World Summit Declaration and accompanying Plan of Action.

296. Among the measures taken to improve the physical and mental well-being of children, are the following:

(a) Amendment of the child adoption law with a view to increasing the protection of adopted children. The age of adoption has been increased and adopted children are to be followed up;

(b) Amendment of the law pertaining to the age of consent which has been increased from 12 years to 16 years;

(c) Introduction of child abuse centres in the various regional hospitals of the country; measures are taken to identify child abuse cases and to protect such children;

(d) Opening of a centre for battered wives and children;

(e) The National Women's Council and the National Children's Council offer family counselling services at the various women's centres in the country;

(f) Various amendments of legislation pertaining to working conditions and rights of women and the education of women on their rights are undertaken by the Ministry of Women's Rights and Family Welfare. The Ministry is also working on legislation pertaining specifically to the rights and the protection of children.

297. Regarding the district of Black River, in particular, the Ministry of Health is presently implementing the various recommendations proposed following the "Study on factors contributing to high infant mortality in the district of Black River". The creation of new service points, provision of transport facilities, intensification of ante- and post-natal care, employment

of doctors full-time, continuous family health education including the promotion of breast-feeding and proper nutrition, increase of vaccination coverage and the better organization of services are among some of the measures taken to improve the situation.

Pregnant mothers

298. The Ministry of Health has recently taken measures to strengthen primary health care services provided in Mauritius and in Rodrigues, such as training of different grades of primary health care personnel and initiation of health services research to improve the existing services, organization of community based rehabilitation, etc.

299. Maternity and paediatric units have also been strengthened in hospital and additional facilities are to be provided.

300. All pregnant women are encouraged to attend maternal and child health clinics for ante-natal care and to give birth in health institutions. A few home confinements are performed by nurse-midwives and traditional birth attendants. After delivery, all nursing mothers are encouraged to breast-feed their babies and follow post-natal care at health centres. The mothers are also encouraged to bring their children to the centres for examinations and growth monitoring. A campaign on breast-feeding was recently undertaken by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with NGOs.

301. As regards Rodrigues, particular recommendations were proposed following the publication by the Management Audit Bureau in July 1991 of a report entitled "Improvement of management effectiveness of Rodrigues health services". The recommendations are presently being studied by the Ministry of Health with a view to their implementation.

Physically and mentally handicapped persons

302. A Trust Fund for the Disabled Persons was established in 1989. The objects of the Fund are to set up training centres and sheltered workshops for disabled persons and to develop and provide appropriate training with a view to enabling them to secure employment or to work on their own account. Moreover, the labour law has been amended to encourage the employment of physically handicapped persons.

303. In Mauritius, there exists a school for the blind and a school for the deaf. Two private institutions which are run by non-governmental organizations and are partly subsidized by the Government cater for the mentally handicapped.

304. It has been suggested that a study on dyslexia as a cause of poor achievement in school be undertaken in Mauritius.

305. A pilot project based on the Community Based Rehabilitation Programme is being conducted in the district of Flacq and the programme will be extended to the whole island within the next five years. The programme aims at reducing the impact of disabling and handicapping conditions. Training is being given to community based rehabilitation workers.

Mentally ill persons

306. At present the welfare of mental patients is governed by the Mental Health Act of 1906, which is known as the Lunacy Act. This Act serves as guidelines for the management, security and welfare of patients.

307. Brown Sequard Hospital is the oldest mental hospital in the Indian Ocean and can accommodate about 800 inmates. In order to safeguard the rights of mental patients, the Lunacy Act, through the assistance of a sitting magistrate and officials of the Ministry of Health, provides safeguards for the compulsory admission of persons suffering from certain types of psychiatric illnesses and the certification of treated patients.

308. The Ministry of Health is presently working on new legislation. The Ministry envisaged embarking upon a project regarding the decentralization of services for the mentally ill, with a view to providing more personalized care to long-standing institutionalized patients. Instead of being cared for at the central institution, patients will be referred to units nearer their homes. Trained personnel will be posted at various area health centres in the country to care for the patients. Relatives will be encouraged to take care of the mentally ill at home.

Drug addicts/alcoholics

309. The Ministry of Health is presently working on a national programme of alcohol and drug prevention, in conjunction with the Non-Communicable Diseases Programme. The prevention campaign aims at increasing awareness of the negative impact of alcohol and drug consumption on families and society as a whole, with a view to decreasing alcoholism.

310. A survey of the number of beds occupied by patients with alcohol-related problems is presently being carried out in various health institutions of the country.

311. A centre for rehabilitation of drug addicts already exists in Mauritius.

312. The Non-Communicable Diseases Programme has already taken a number of primary and secondary prevention measures against smoking and alcohol abuse. These measures are to be strengthened.

The elderly

313. Priority is given to the elderly during attendance at health care institutions and measures are taken to alleviate waiting time for them. The policy of the Government in the next two years is to create a department of gerontology and introduce geriatric departments at district hospital level.

AIDS patients

314. There already exists a National Aids Control Programme in Mauritius. The Action Plan for 1992 aims at preventing/minimizing HIV transmission, reducing morbidity/mortality associated with HIV infection and minimizing the psychosocial impact on individuals.

315. The introduction of legislation relating to the protection of AIDS patients' right to health care and protection of health personnel against the risks and their subsequent care in case of exposure of AIDS while discharging their duties is envisaged in the two-year plan of the Ministry of Health; as well as formulation of national policy to establish guidelines relating to a code of ethics and counselling of AIDS victims.

Paragraph 5 (f) of the guidelines

Environmental and industrial hygiene

316. The Ministry of Environment has recently submitted a Master Plan on the Environment. This Master Plan has already secured funds from the World Bank.

317. The Environmental Protection Act is not fully operational as yet and still remains to be finalized. Under this Act, the Ministry of Health is the agency responsible for the control of atmospheric pollution, noise pollution and inspection of the quality of drinking water, development of health-based standards and norms, identifying hazards, monitoring the environment, etc.

318. There exists an Environmental Health Unit at the Ministry of Health. It works in close liaison with the Occupational Health Unit and looks into all matters pertaining to the conditions of work in the industries, sanitation, control of environmental pollution.

319. The Factory Inspectorate is empowered by law to take legal action if working conditions at the workplace are not satisfactory and if the rules and regulations relating to environmental and industrial hygiene are not respected by management.

Paragraph 5 (g) of the guidelines

Control of epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases

320. All the infectious diseases are now under control and the incidence of TB, typhoid and tetanus is one of the lowest in the third world countries. Malaria and schistosomiasis are constantly monitored through the Malaria and the Schistosomiasis Control Programmes. These programmes are to be strengthened.

321. Heart diseases (excluding hypertensive diseases, acute rheumatic fever and diseases of the pulmonary circulation) and cerebrovascular diseases were the two principal causes of death in 1992. The Non-Communicable Diseases Programme aims at reducing the incidence of such diseases through primary and secondary prevention programmes.

322. With regard to AIDS, see paragraphs 314 and 315 above. Further cooperation with NGOs, people's groups, industrial and commercial organizations, the hotel sector, etc. is envisaged.

323. The Occupational Health Unit of the Ministry of Health is responsible for the medical surveillance of workers and the surveillance of the working

environment and identification and monitoring of hazardous substances. The sectors surveyed are those of agriculture, industry, construction sites and certain branches of the civil service, such as fire-fighters.

324. The Occupational Health Unit has outpatients units at three regional hospitals.

325. There exists an Occupational Health Safety Act, although the occupational health regulations have not yet been formulated.

Paragraph 5 (h) of the guidelines

Institutional care facilities

326. In Mauritius as at the end of 1992, there were four regional hospitals with a total of 1,784 beds and four district hospitals with a total of 315 beds. There was also a psychiatric hospital with a bed complement of 887, and other specialized hospitals for chest, eye and ear, nose and throat diseases, as well as a skin diseases infirmary and a centre for rehabilitation of addicts, with altogether a total of 148 beds. This brought the grand total of number of beds in government institutions to 3,134, excluding the five beds in one of the area health centres; that is, one bed for 336 inhabitants or 2.9 per 1,000 inhabitants. As from 1992 the newly erected Cardiac Centre is operational.

Ambulatory care facilities

327. All regional, district and specialized diseases hospitals have an out-patient department. The delivery of primary health care has been organized around 26 area health centres with each having a number of satellite community health centres, of which there are 106 in all. The basic services delivered at the community health centres include the treatment of common diseases and injuries, maternal and child care and family planning. In addition to these services, area health centres also provide dental care and public health services.

328. In the private sector, there were 27 medical establishments on the sugar estates providing out-patient care. Out-patient care is also available in the eight private clinics of the country. As from 1992, incentives are being given to prospective investors wishing to set up clinics in Mauritius.

Mobile services

329. The services provided by the public sector mentioned above are supplemented by five mobile dispensaries and a mobile maternal and child health and family planning clinic, which service the remote localities. There are also two mobile dental units which cater mainly for primary school children.

330. In Mauritius there is one doctor for every 1,150 inhabitants and the dentist/population ratio is 1:7,806. The number of qualified nurses and midwives is one for 395 inhabitants.

Paragraph 5 (i) of the guidelines

331. Although some programmes have been successfully evaluated in the past, the mechanism needs to be systematically extended to all programmes and projects which have an impact on health.

332. Small steps have been taken in this direction and a few programmes such as the AIDS control programme, have in-built monitoring and evaluation systems, but most programmes are not evaluated; there is definitely much scope for improvement in this direction.

Paragraph 6 of the guidelines

333. Mauritius, being a welfare State, medical care is free for everyone. The right to health care is guaranteed for everybody.

Paragraph 7 of the guidelines

334. Community participation in the planning, organization, operation and control of primary health care started in 1986. Since 1986, 50 Community health centres have been built by the local community. Each community has a regional committee of 20 persons drawn from the inhabitants of the village to plan, organize and monitor primary health care projects. A national trust fund for community health has been set up to promote and strengthen primary health care activities.

Paragraph 8 of the guidelines

335. Medical care in Mauritius has always been backed up by a sound information, education and communication (IEC) component.

Paragraph 9 of the guidelines

336. WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and other international organizations have contributed through bilateral agreements. They assist in implementing health policy and objectives by providing the necessary know-how in terms of consultancies and financing for implementation of key projects.

337. The strategy for international organizations has always been guided by the philosophy of strengthening our capacity to provide our own health care.

Article 13

Paragraphs 1 to 4 of the guidelines

338. Mauritius has overcome the hurdle of achieving universal primary education. The Government is discharging its obligation to provide primary education that is compulsory and available free to all by providing all primary school children with a midday snack as an incentive to regular attendance and ensuring that each village council area has at least one primary school, i.e. the primary schools are within walking distance for all pupils. There are 281 primary schools for a school population of 125,000 aged 5 to 12.

339. Secondary education, like primary education, is free. Access to secondary schools is open to all those who qualify by passing the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE). Some technical and vocational courses are available for primary and secondary school leavers in pre-vocational institutions. Technical subjects like geometrical and mechanical drawing, design, technology and design and communications, fashion and fabrics, food and nutrition, are taught in most secondary schools.

340. Education at the tertiary level is free except for those following part-time courses who are in employment. At present there are about 3,000 students at the University of Mauritius. The new academic complex which will be completed by the end of this year will cater for a student population of 5,000 within the next 10 years. The Ministry of Education spends about 10 per cent of its budget on higher education.

Census 1990

Population over 12 yrs	Literacy rate
Both sexes	80.7
Male	85.4
Female	76.0

Gross enrolment rate - 1993

	Male	Female	Both sexes
Primary	106.9	107.9	107.4
Secondary	48	51	49.4

Drop-out rate (%) - 1993

Primary: Std	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
	0	0	0.2	0.3	0.7	23.9

Secondary:	I	II	III	IV	V	Lower VI
	4.0	5.2	5.9	15.0	36.6	0.0

Exam results (%) 1993 (pass rates)

	Male	Female	Total
Certificate of Primary Education	55.9	61.4	58.6
School Certificate	63.6	64.1	63.9
Higher School Certificate	60.8	65.8	65.3

341. Major reforms are being undertaken in the primary education sector to achieve qualificative improvements. The policy of the Ministry is that equal opportunity must be provided to all children for success at the CPE exams as 40 per cent of the students fail at their first attempt.

342. The nine years' schooling policy is the central part of the Education Master Plan. It focuses on the expansion of lower secondary school capacity in order to provide a full nine years of schooling for all. This would also ease the pressure on pupils and teachers generated by the CPE and, as a result, increase teaching and learning quality throughout the entire primary course. This approach will enable children to leave the formal school system with a higher level of literacy and numeracy than would otherwise have been possible, while reducing the incidence of child labour which is, anyway, low.

The out of school education programme

343. The target groups for the promotion of literacy are:

(i) Illiterate adults;

(ii) Illiterate young people (12-19 years of age);

(iii) Youngsters in the 12-19 age group leaving school before reaching the final grade or leaving standard VI without appropriate certification.

The ongoing literacy development work indicates a coverage of 1,087 persons in 1993. There are more than three times as many female participants as male. About 2,700 school drop-outs are absorbed by the pre-vocational training programme operated under the Industrial Vocational Training Board. If the Government's objective of reducing illiteracy by half by the year 2000 is to be attained, the coverage will have to be considerably extended.

344. The out of school education programme is financed by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry for Women's Rights, UNICEF and NGOs.

345. Education expenditure in relation to total Government expenditure is 13.3 per cent. The structure of the present education system is as follows:

(i) Six years of primary education being used to select pupils for secondary school entrance;

(ii) Five years of secondary schooling to the Cambridge School Certificate, followed by a further two years to the Higher School Certificate;

(iii) Three years at university for a full-time degree course.

346. A new secondary school for girls is under construction and will open in January 1995. Land has been identified for the construction of six primary schools and five secondary schools and the expansion of one secondary school in Port Louis.

347. Each village council area has at least one primary school. Land is being acquired in seven villages for the construction of new primary schools.

348. The schooling schedules (1994) are:

	Primary	Secondary
1st term	7 January-13 April	7 January-13 April
2nd term	25 April-26 July	25 April-26 July
3rd term	16 August-18 November	16 August-4 November

The school hours are: Primary 9 a.m. to 3.15 p.m.; Secondary 8 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.

349. There are more than three times as many female participants as male in ongoing adult literacy development. The majority of the courses use Creole as the language of instruction and French as the language for reading. Some courses aim at building up functional literacy in English after establishment of reading skills in French.

350. There are schools for physically and mentally disabled children.

351. To encourage the inhabitants of the Island of Rodrigues to go on to tertiary education, two scholarships are awarded to the best Higher School Certificate graduates yearly.

Paragraph 6 of the guidelines

352. All teaching staff are unionized. They are entitled to local leave, accumulated vacation leave, paid sick leave in addition to school vacations. There is a teacher's club which is getting Government help. Teachers are given incremental credits for successful completion of upgrading courses. Teachers' salaries compare favourably to salaries of other civil servants. Salaries of all workers are regulated by the Pay Research Bureau and the Remuneration Boards. There is also the Teachers Provident Fund.

Paragraph 7 of the guidelines

353. The number of primary schools established and administered by the Government is 223. There are 58 private primary schools (grant-aided by the Government). The number of secondary schools established and administered by the Government is 23. There are 100 private secondary schools (grant-aided by Government). Admission to secondary schools is based on performance at the Certificate of Primary Education. Admission to primary schools is based on a system of catchment areas.

Paragraph 8 of the guidelines

354. There have been no changes in national policies, laws and practices affecting the right enshrined in article 13 negatively.

Paragraph 9 of the guidelines

355. The World Food Programme is helping the Government in the school feeding project. UNICEF has provided support in the field of primary special education and also training of heads of institutions. The World Bank and the African Development Bank have supported the implementation of the Master Plan and the improvement of infrastructure of educational institutions. Friendly countries, for example, the United Kingdom, India and France are helping in the capacity building programme and in the training of staff.

356. The Ministry of Education actively promotes the participation of parents and the community in improving the quality of education. Parent teacher associations receive a matching grant from the Government and local business and enterprises (hotels and banks) are invited to support school initiated projects.

Article 15

Paragraph 1 of the guidelines

357. The Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius guarantees the right of every Mauritian citizen to take part in the cultural life which he or she considers pertinent and to manifest his or her own culture. In fact, chapter II of the Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius provides for the protection of the fundamental rights and freedom of the Mauritian citizen, namely:

Protection of freedom of conscience, of thought, religion and freedom to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance;

Protection of freedom of expression, i.e. freedom to hold opinions and impart ideas and information without interference with his correspondence;

Protection of freedom of assembly and association, i.e. no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his right to assemble freely or associate himself with other persons for the protection of his interest;

Protection of freedom to establish schools;

No religious denomination and no religious, social, ethnic or cultural association or group is prevented from establishing schools at its own expense;

Protection from discrimination on the basis of race, caste, place of origin, political opinion, colour or creed.

(a) Availability of funds

358. The Mauritian society has the advantage of being a pluricultural one where the world heritage is at work to produce a symbiosis of culture. The

cultural policy of the Government is to promote the cultural identities of the whole population so as to foster their self-advancement and stimulate their creativity. The Government is fully committed to giving new dimensions to all cultural forms and expressions to ensure unity in diversity.

359. The arts and culture sectors were formerly part of the then Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. Conscious of the cultural needs of the country, a separate Ministry, namely the Ministry of Arts, Culture, Leisure and Reform Institutions, was set up in 1992 to cater, inter alia, for the cultural development of the nation. A provision of Rs 33 million has been made in the National Budget 1994/1995 for the cultural component of the Ministry. Over and above this substantial amount, local authorities and parastatal organizations have a separate budget for the promotion of the arts, culture and leisure within their sectors. Furthermore, the Government provides grants and facilities to support the activities of religious bodies and major socio-cultural organizations.

(b) Institutional infrastructure

360. The existing cultural infrastructure is being consolidated and extended through a network of institutions which operate either under the aegis of government departments/ministries or as autonomous bodies. Government policy has been very supportive of independent initiatives in the general area of the cultures and traditions of the different segments of the population. The Government has extended support in the form of land and other facilities to enable the establishment of the following institutions:

(i) Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture;

(ii) Chinese Cultural Centre;

(iii) Islamic Cultural Centre;

(iv) African Cultural Centre.

361. The British Council and the "Centre Charles Baudelaire" organize a series of activities for the propagation of English and French culture respectively.

Theatre/cinema

362. A National Drama Festival has been held every year for the last 50 years. The festival, which started with plays in the English language, is presently being held in 10 languages, namely, English, French, Hindi, Bhojpuri, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi, Mandarin, Urdu and Creole. Some 1,500 artists participate in the festival every year. Drama societies are being set up in schools to motivate pupils to participate in drama activities.

363. The three existing theatres in Mauritius have recently been renovated and equipped to facilitate the staging of plays and the organization of concerts. Efforts are also being made to upgrade the infrastructure in the rural areas with a view to making the performing arts more easily accessible to the population at large.

364. The Mauritius Film Development Corporation was set up in 1986 for the promotion of cinema in Mauritius.

Mahatma Gandhi Institute

365. The Mahatma Gandhi Institute, which has been set up by the Government, is a centre for the study of Oriental and Asian culture and traditions.

Conservatoire de Musique François Mitterrand

366. The Conservatoire de Musique François Mitterrand has been set up for the teaching and promotion of western music and dance.

(c) Promotion of cultural identity

367. Language is the vehicle of thoughts and cultural values. It is the declared policy of the Government to promote all ancestral languages in order to preserve the cultural identity of all the cultural components of Mauritius. Through our system of education, Mauritians are given the means and opportunity to learn two international languages, English and French, as well as the ancestral languages existing in Mauritius, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi, Chinese and Arabic. In addition, the Government provides grants to bodies engaged in the teaching of ancestral languages in the evenings and during week-ends.

368. Religion is another element of cultural identity which the Government continues to promote through grants to religious institutions. The main festivals of each ethnic group - Maha Shivaratri, Cavadee, Chinese Spring Festival, Ugadi, Eid-Ul-Fitr, Ganesh Chaturthi, Divali and Christmas - have been proclaimed national festivals and are factors of mutual appreciation among individuals and groups. Interreligious and intercultural understanding are further enhanced by the publication of books on the teachings and philosophies of the main religions and festivals of Mauritius.

369. Dioramas for each national festival, highlighting the cultural and religious aspects of the particular festival are displayed in a prominent place in the capital to sensitize the population on the different cultural traditions of our country. For the National Day celebrations, composite cultural programmes are mounted, with emphasis on the diversity of cultures and the unity of the nation.

(d) Promotion of awareness and enjoyment of the cultural heritage of national ethnic groups and minorities and of indigenous peoples

(e) Role of the mass and communications media

370. The national radio and television and the press play a vital role in promoting participation in cultural life. Mauritius being a multilingual and multiracial country, cultural programmes on radio and television are carried in several languages and dialects, including English, French, Hindustani, Creole and Bhojpuri. This multifaceted initiative helps to develop cultural identity and harmony in the country.

371. Regarded as a means of diffusion of information, education, entertainment and intercultural cohesion, television has penetrated almost every home in Mauritius and has also been introduced in the island of Rodrigues since November 1987.

372. At least one out of eight persons has access to a newspaper in Mauritius, which means that a wide section of the population gets the opportunity to read and enjoy articles related to culture. Cultural activities are given good coverage by the press, which helps create greater awareness among the people.

(f) Preservation and promotion of mankind's cultural heritage

373. There are several institutions/statutory boards operating in Mauritius with the objective of preserving and promoting our natural and cultural heritage, namely:

(i) Mauritius Institute

374. There are five museums managed by the Mauritius Institute which are situated in various parts of the island:

Natural History Museum, Port Louis (1880);

Naval and Historical Museum, Mahebourg (1900);

Robert Edward Hart Memorial Museum, Souillac (1967);

Sookdeo Bissoondoyal Memorial Museum (1987);

Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Memorial Centre for Culture (1987).

(ii) National Library

375. In addition to the library services provided by the local authorities, a public library exists within the compound of the Mauritius Institute in Port Louis, capital city of Mauritius. Its functions consist, inter alia, of the collection of national literature and storage of rare and specially valuable editions.

(iii) National Archives

376. The National Archives are the repository of records and documents which reflect the social, political, historical, economic, religious and cultural heritage of the nation. It dates as far back as the French colonization of Mauritius, which started in 1721.

(iv) National Monuments Board

377. The National Monuments Board was set up in 1985 to advise, inter alia, on the designation and maintenance of ancient historical monuments and ways and means to foster public interest in them.

(v) Aapravasi Ghat - Shelter for those who came from afar

378. The place where the first indentured labourers from India landed in November 1834 and the "Ghat", a Hindi term meaning a temporary shelter, at which they spent a few nights, have been declared a historical site and named "Aapravasi Ghat".

(vi) Pointe Canon

379. A monument commemorating the abolition of slavery in February 1834 has been erected at Pointe Canon, Mahebourg. Each year, cultural activities are organized on the site to mark this historic event.

(vii) National Arts Council

380. The National Arts Council was set up by the Government with a view to fostering a strong artistic life throughout the nation by promoting excellence in and development of the arts and increasing their accessibility to the public and, through that, fostering our national unity.

Paragraph 2 of the guidelines

Protection of moral and material interests of authors

381. Mauritius is a party to the Universal Copyright Convention administered by UNESCO and is also a member State of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). In 1986, legislation for the setting up of a Collective Copyright Administration Society was enacted. In February 1989, Mauritius acceded to the Berne Convention (Paris Act 1971) for the protection of literary and artistic works. Funds are provided by the Government to cover the administrative costs of the Mauritius Society of Authors set up under the Copyright Act of 1986.

Cultural agreements

382. The Republic of Mauritius has signed cultural agreements with many friendly countries for the promotion of cultural and artistic exchanges. Mauritius is a member of UNESCO and has a permanent representative at the United Nations.

Paragraph 4 of the guidelines

Dissemination of scientific knowledge

383. Scientific information knowledge has been incorporated in the primary school curriculum through environmental studies. Science subjects form an integral part of the lower secondary school curriculum. For the higher secondary classes, science subjects are made available in schools of excellence which are properly equipped to that end. Teaching staff and laboratory attendants are continually trained with a view to upgrading their skills. In this context seminars and workshops are regularly organized with the collaboration of the University of Mauritius/the Mauritius Institute of Education and the Mauritius College of the Air.

384. With a view to disseminating science among the student community and the public at large, a science centre will be set up, incorporating a science museum, a science park, a planetarium and an exhibition hall.

385. A guide to places of scientific and technological and industrial interest is under publication. This guide aims at stimulating the diffusion of scientific knowledge amongst the school population and is intended to be of use equally to teachers, parents and members of the public.

386. Science exhibitions involving secondary school students are held yearly at national and regional level. It has been observed that as a result of these exhibitions there has been a gradual increase in the number of students offering science subjects.

387. An Action Plan on Science Education has been published and is now being implemented.

III. CONSIDERATION OF CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COVENANT IN MAURITIUS

388. In its concluding observations (see E/C.12/1994/8), the Committee raised a number of subjects of concern. These are discussed below.

1. Women in Mauritian society (art. 3)

"The Committee notes with concern that, despite the efforts undertaken by the Government, women still occupy a subordinate role in Mauritian society. Discrimination and violence against women continue to be social problems."

389. This is a generalized and provocative statement which implies that the Government has neither taken any action to combat violence against women nor attempted to eliminate discrimination against women. For developments in this area, the Committee is referred to paragraphs 126 to 141 above.

2. The right to work (art. 6)

"The Committee is concerned about certain provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act, No. 28 of 1986, according to which certain breaches of discipline by seamen are punishable by imprisonment, ... and foreign seamen may be forcibly conveyed on board ships to perform their duties. These provisions are a subject of concern also to the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations."

390. As has previously been indicated to the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, provisions under sections 183 and 184 (1) of the Merchant Shipping Act are meant for extreme cases where seamen repeatedly indulge in such offences. The attention of the ILO Committee of Experts was drawn to the fact that each case of offence, if

ever it occurs, would be looked into by a disciplinary committee for which appropriate provisions would be made under the Seamen's Code. The provisions under section 183 are, therefore, measures contemplated as a last resort.

3. Equal pay for equal work (art. 7)

"(a) There exists no legislation requiring equal pay for equal work. In this regard, the Committee notes with concern that in the agricultural sector ... women are paid lower wages on the stated assumption that their productivity is lower ..."

391. There does not exist any inequality in remuneration for work of equal value or infringement of the principle of equal pay for equal work. The minimum basic wage for female workers in the agricultural sector is different from that of their male counterparts as it takes account of the nature of the work performed by the female workers. Furthermore, female labourers are exempted from performing various field operations which, because of their strenuous nature, are exclusively performed by male workers. However, male and female workers on task work or piece rate work are remunerated at the same rate for certain field operations which they can both perform. For these operations they are paid at the same rate, either by weight or by measure.

392. Though there exists no legislation requiring equal pay for work of equal value, yet the wages prescribed by category in the various Remuneration Orders, except for the agricultural sector, apply implicitly and explicitly to both male and female employees.

393. It should be noted that in the General Survey (1986) on the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) and Remuneration, 1951 (No. 90) the ILO Committee of Experts pointed out that "The Convention required the principle of equal remuneration to be complied with by national authorities in their field of competence, including legislation, but does not impose the principle to be restated as such in national legislation".

"(b) The Committee is also concerned about excessive overtime work in the Export Processing Zones. In these zones the Labour Act does not apply fully. Further, concern is expressed about the ineffective enforcement of health and safety standards as a consequence of which fatal industrial accidents have increased in recent years."

Excessive overtime in EPZ

394. As far as overtime work in the EPZ is concerned, the Export Enterprises (Remuneration Order) Regulations 1984 provide that a worker may be required to perform extra hours of work for up to 10 hours per week and secondly no worker shall, except with his consent, be required to perform extra hours of work in excess of 10 hours per week. Further, no employer may require a worker to perform extra hours of work unless he has given notice at least 24 hours in advance to the workers of the extra work to be performed and of its duration. It is felt that the present legislation provides adequate protection to the worker against abusive overtime work.

395. On the other hand, it is not true to state that employees of the export processing zones are unprotected as the Labour Act does not apply fully to them. On the contrary, the Export Enterprises (Remuneration Order) Regulations 1983 has fixed wages and other conditions of employment which, inter alia, include normal hours of work per week, annual leave, sick leave, transport benefits and facilities, maternity benefits, issue of protective equipment, attendance bonus, end of year bonus and death grant. These conditions are generally in no way less favourable than those found in the Labour Act.

Safety and health

396. Inspections are carried out regularly by the Factory Inspectorate to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Occupational Safety, Health and Welfare Act 1988. The implementation of the law has led to the reduction of occupational accidents from 16,000 in 1987 to 10,631 in 1993. For the period January to May 1993, only three fatal industrial accidents were reported over a workforce of 490,000. In 1993, 27 fatal industrial accidents were reported, 8 of which arose in the course of road accidents involving vehicles conveying workers to their place of work or to their residence.

397. Various measures have been implemented to improve safety standards, protect workers' overall health and welfare and minimize risks of accidents and diseases, thereby enabling the attainment of a higher level of productivity. The main ones are indicated below:

(a) The inspection policy has recently been reviewed and priority attention is now given to high risk workplaces, e.g. manufacture, storage or handling of toxic substances; use of dangerous machinery or equipment (boilers, carding machine, woodworking machine etc.), dye houses, electrical work, etc. On the other hand a new system of inspection has been introduced to provide for a comprehensive survey of risks and the timely issue of instructions to employers to remedy shortcomings that need urgent attention;

(b) Since 1990, the Ministry of Labour has been providing training on a systematic basis to workers' representatives on safety and health committees to enable them to participate meaningfully in the activities of such committees. Under the second phase of the national workers' education project, advanced training in the field of occupational safety, health and the environment is programmed annually for both workers' representatives and middle management;

(c) Under a regional African safety and health project, sponsored by ILO, covering the period 1992-1994, a Training and Information Unit in the field of occupational safety and health has been set up within the newly established Labour Information Centre. Since September 1992, the Unit operates a computerized safety and health information retrieval system and provides an inquiry service for government services, employers, employees, trade unions, etc. Training of Factory Inspectorate staff has already started. The Unit has been providing technical assistance to employers for the organization of training for upper and middle management.

"The Committee also feels that Government has shown little willingness to ensure that foreign workers are treated in accordance with article 7 of the Covenant and with pertinent international labour standards."

Migrant workers

398. Foreign nationals in employment are legally entitled to the same terms and conditions of employment prescribed in the national labour legislation. However, it is a fact recognized worldwide that legislation is not in itself sufficient to give equal treatment to migrant workers. It needs to be supplemented by effective machinery and practical measures. Migrant workers themselves through fear of reprisals and ignorance are not in a position to take initiatives to secure respect of legislation. It is for this reason that a special unit has been created in the Enforcement Branch of the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations to investigate violations and enforce the application of the relevant legislation.

4. The right to form trade unions (art. 8)

"(a) The Committee is concerned about the restrictions of the right to form trade unions under the 1973 Industrial Relations Act. Further, the Committee states that the right to strike although recognized in theory cannot be exercised in practice because of the 21-day cooling off period provided for under the IRA and the Minister's power to refer any industrial dispute to compulsory arbitration, enforceable by penalties involving compulsory labour. Participation in a strike not approved by court is a sufficient ground for dismissal. It asserts that genuine collective bargaining is not practised in Mauritius and that wages and benefits are in effect determined by the Government."

"The Committee notes a certain tendency on the part of the Mauritius Government to use labour legislation to block trade union recognition and dismiss workers."

The right of association

399. The Industrial Relations Act requires a trade union wishing to be registered to follow certain procedures before registration is granted. These procedures are designed to make the establishment of a trade union public, to ensure that its objectives are clearly defined and are meant to safeguard the occupational interests of the workers. A trade union aggrieved by a decision has, by virtue of section 10 (2) of the Industrial Relations Act, the right to appeal against refusal of its registration to an independent tribunal.

400. The right for a worker to be a member of a trade union, not to be a member, or to refuse to be a member of a trade union is guaranteed by the Industrial Relations Act.

401. The right to strike is subject to the prior observance of the procedures outlined in section 92 of the Industrial Relations Act which in effect lays

emphasis on the use of negotiation, conciliation and arbitration at various levels as valuable alternatives to open industrial action through strikes or lock-outs or as a prerequisite for such action.

402. There is no provision in our legislation to the effect that a court must approve participation in a strike to avoid dismissal of workers. Workers who are dismissed from employment following involvement in a strike may seek remedy at the Industrial Court if legal procedures have not otherwise been followed and if they believe their dismissal is unjustified.

Wage fixing and collective bargaining

403. Fixing of minimum wages and conditions of employment in the private sector through legislation is viewed by Government as a social contract necessary for the satisfaction of the indispensable social and economic needs of the employees. It is a fact that the Government's intervention has led to a coverage of 90 per cent of the employees in the private sector, but this does not in any way preclude workers' organizations bargaining collectively with employers for better conditions of employment. The National Remuneration Board, which is composed of representatives of both employers and workers, fixes minimum wages generally by sector of economic activity and also in certain specific cases by occupational category. The fixing of minimum wages is conditioned by section 47 of the Industrial Relations Act and in the exercise of its functions, the National Remuneration Board has regard, inter alia, to:

(a) The interests of the persons immediately concerned and the community as a whole;

(b) The principles and practices of good industrial relations;

(c) The need for Mauritius to maintain a favourable balance of trade and balance of payments;

(d) The need to ensure the continued ability of the Government to finance development programmes and recurrent expenditure in the public sector;

(e) The need to increase the rate of economic growth and to provide greater employment opportunities;

(f) The need to preserve and promote the competitive position of local products in overseas markets;

(g) The need to develop schemes for payment by results, and so far as possible to relate increased remuneration to increased labour productivity;

(h) The need to prevent gains in the wages of employees from being adversely affected by price increases;

(i) The need to establish and maintain reasonable differentials in rewards between different categories of skills and levels of responsibility;

(j) The need to maintain a fair relation between the incomes of different sectors in the community.

404. Furthermore, the Industrial Relations Act also sets out a comprehensive code of practice designed to assist employers and trade unions of employees to make effective collective agreements. The Code is founded on the following:

(a) The employer and his employees have a common interest in the success of the undertaking;

(b) Good industrial relations are the joint responsibility of management and employees and the trade unions representing them;

(c) Collective bargaining, carried out in a reasonable and constructive manner between employers and strong representative trade unions, is the best method of conducting industrial relations;

(d) Good human relations between employers and employees are essential to good industrial relations.

405. Under its ILO/UNDP Workers' Education Programme, the Government organizes seminars on collective bargaining for trade union officials. Such supportive measures carried out under the Workers' Education Programme are geared to dispensing training to trade union officials in knowledge and skills required to conduct collective bargaining effectively and subsequently establish a sound system of labour relations.

> "(b) The Committee is further concerned by the fact that the proposed Trade Union and Labour Relations Act (TULRA) appears in some respect to be even less favourable to trade unions."

Trade Union and Labour Relations Bill

406. The report of the Special Law Review Committee on the Industrial Relations Act (Garrioch Committee) was released by Government along with a copy of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Bill on 6 May 1994 in the course of a meeting the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations and the Minister for Civil Service Affairs and Employment had with the social partners. The social partners have been given seven weeks to make representations on the Bill and these will be considered by Government. In the meantime, explanations are being given to and debates held with the social partners as and when requested by them.

407. The Trade Union and Labour Relations Bill**, based largely on the principles of the Special Law Review Committee, aims at:

(a) A simplification of the procedures for registration and recognition of trade unions;

(b) An improvement in the scope for collective bargaining;

** A copy of the Bill is available for consultation in the secretariat.

(c) The provision of a more comprehensive mechanism for the settlement of industrial disputes in both the public and private sectors, thereby improving the avenue for a speedy and effective settlement;

(d) A redefinition of the procedure leading to strike action;

(e) The transfer of powers vested in the Minister to independent institutions.

408. The Bill lays constant emphasis on the absolute need for dialogue, consultation and voluntary conciliation and arbitration before a problem reaches a deadlock. The draft Bill reflects a new philosophy for a balanced approach to human relationships at the workplace. The social partners are given the obligation to regulate their relations among themselves or within independent mechanisms where they may solve their problems, with the reduction of the State intervention to a minimum of safeguards for the protection of the national economy and the public interest.

5. Child labour (art. 10)

"The Committee notes with regret that Mauritian child labour legislation is not strictly enforced. It further takes note of the Government's own view expressed in its recent report to CEDAW that Mauritius does not have a comprehensive system of family benefits through which all families benefit in a universal manner, and that the system of family allowances should be reviewed because the present regulations penalize the very families that need the allowance most."

409. Action to enforce the labour law prohibiting the employment of children under 15 years in an ongoing process which from time to time has to be reviewed to yield better results. Although child labour is already low (0.7 per cent of a working population of 415,000), the Government's efforts are geared towards its reduction until the problem is resolved. Government action is therefore pursued according to the following strategies:

(a) On the enforcement side, the enforcement officers of the Ministry of Labou and Industrial Relations have stepped up their efforts in detecting and discontinuing children's labour during regular inspections of places of employment;

(b) With a view to increasing awareness about the illegality of child labour and its adverse effects on children's health and development, the Workers' Education Branch of the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations is placing more emphasis on the subject during its educational sessions;

(c) The Labour Information Centre will also address the issue in the course of training sessions on occupational safety and health meant for management and labour representatives.

410. In June 1990, the Government of Mauritius ratified ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age for Employment. Since then, determination to eliminate child labour, as far as possible, has never faltered.

6. The right to food (art. 11.2)

411. The Committee's concern that the abolition of subsidies on rice and flour affects food security for the most vulnerable groups of the population has been dealt with under article 11 (see paras. 197-203 above).

7. The right to housing (art. 11.3)

"The Committee expresses its concern about the discontinuation of the Government's programme for providing low-cost housing in Mauritius ... Further, concern is expressed about Government harassment of hundreds of homeless people who built shacks on 'State land'."

Provision of low-cost housing in Mauritius

412. Although the Central Housing Authority (CHA) was established in 1959 with a view to tackling the housing problems of the country as a whole, it was saddled for two decades with emergency housing programmes following several cyclones since 1960.

413. What needs to be underlined here is:

(a) Whilst the major 1960 cyclone Carol had badly damaged 40,000 houses, and the 1975 cyclone Gervaise damaged 13,000 houses, only some 2,500 housing units were damaged by the February 1994 cyclone Hollanda. These figures clearly demonstrate that the successive major cyclones affected fewer and fewer houses because of the improvement in the structural soundness brought to the housing stock and housing quality in general;

(b) Whilst in 1968, the per capita income of the country was Rs 1,046, in 1993, it stood at Rs 51,687. This indicates, inter alia, that the ability to invest in a shelter by wage-earners has increased substantially over the last 15 years, so much so that better housing schemes than those traditionally undertaken by the CHA can now be planned, implemented and affordable to the low-income categories.

414. With this background and in the light of the fact that Government activity in the housing sector was almost negligible during the 1980s (when government actions and investments were focused essentially on employment creation, education and training, health and other pressing social services) a task force on housing was set up at the end of 1990 to examine in depth the situation in the housing sector, to draw up a master plan for housing development in Mauritius and Rodrigues and more specifically to survey the present requirements and to propose future plans for the provision of housing for different categories of house seekers, especially the low-income and middle-income groups.

415. The April 1991 report of the Task Force set down, inter alia, the following objectives:

(a) To plan and provide for the construction of 73,000 housing units over the next 10 years (1991-2000) in response to identified housing needs;

(b) To encourage housing projects in the vicinity of employment centres which depend on regular labour force and other permanent staff;

(c) To devote initially 40 per cent of funds for housing to lower income groups;

(d) To design projects based on the "neighbourhood" concept, with facilities for healthy community development and all essential services;

(e) To launch pilot projects with particular attention to multistoreyed apartment buildings, with the object of assessing their acceptability and educating Mauritians in adapting to life in high-rise apartments;

(f) To plan for 5,000 to 7,000 houses every year, subject to the availability of financial resources, construction facilities and market requirements;

(g) To create a National Housing Company to manage, control and supervise the National Housing Programme, while catering to the changing needs of the new generation of house seekers;

(h) To explore the possibilities offered by new materials, the latest building technology and prefabricated components with a view to maximizing the rate of construction while keeping costs down.

416. The National Housing Development Company (NHDC) has since its creation in 1992 built 2,030 housing units to date and will complete another 1,360 units during the course of the year. The housing units are meant primarily for the income groups drawing between Rs 3,000 and 4,000, and between Rs 4,000, and Rs 6,000 per month.

417. It should be observed here that to further facilitate access to NHDC housing, the Government decided in February 1994 to lower down-payments as follows:

Salary	Down-payment
Less than Rs 4 000	Rs 5 000
Rs 4 000-Rs 6 000	5 per cent of housing unit sale price
More than Rs 6 000	10 per cent of housing unit sale price

418. The Government has further reviewed loan repayment facilities from the monthly equated instalments to the progressive repayment system for beneficiaries drawing less than Rs 6,000 monthly.

419. Apart from the National Housing Programme assigned to the NHDC, the Government has during the period 1984-1993 allocated 13,450 building site leases to enable those with very low incomes to build their own individual houses.

420. It should be also noted that by December 1991, the Government had approved 1,298 leases to squatters, thereby regularizing their illegal occupation of State lands.

CHA housing and reasons underlying closure of CHA

421. Immediately after its inception in December 1960, the Central Housing Authority (CHA) embarked on a cyclone housing scheme to rehouse victims, especially of cyclones Alix and Carol (1960); thereafter victims of cyclones Beryl (1961) and Jenny (1962) were also assisted under the original Cyclone Housing Scheme of 1960. The scheme was financed firstly by the British Government and thereafter by the Government of Mauritius.

422. In October 1975, in the wake of cyclone Gervaise (February 1975) the CHA was authorized to proceed as a priority with the building of houses for all those who were living in tents and in classrooms. After 1981, no major construction programme was undertaken. Construction of houses on group sites slowed down from 1983/84 and stopped completely in 1989.

423. In the early 1980s, problems such as accumulation of arrears due by tenants, increasing costs of labour and reduction in subsidies forced the CHA to diversify its activities. Hence contracts for construction or maintenance of public buildings, etc., were undertaken.

424. In the 1989/1990 and 1990/1991 budgets, the Government decided to sell all CHA houses constructed up to 1980 to their occupiers at prices ranging from Rs 500 to Rs 800 to a maximum of Rs 1,000. Following this decision the revenue of the CHA decreased. Moreover the CHA was, on account of its high overhead costs, unable to compete with private contractors to obtain contracts. Direct subsidies to enable the CHA to continue amounted to some 50 million rupees for the financial year 1993/1994. It was evident that the Government could not continue subsidizing this organization at the above rate especially as its work force was idle.

Statement relating to CHA and cyclone Hollanda

425. The normal activities of the CHA included the construction of temporary shelters for cyclone victims to move into so that refugee centres (including schools) could be freed within the shortest possible delay.

426. For cyclone Hollanda, the Government assigned to the Ministry of Works management of the temporary shelter project. This project was executed by the Development Works Corporation, another building and infrastructure construction arm of the Government.

427. Hollanda cyclone victims who were found eligible (172 out of 268) for NHDC housing units have been allocated those units with the Government paying the requisite deposit of Rs 5,000 on their behalf.

The squatter issue

428. Squatting, which is described in Mauritius as the occupation of State lands by individuals without any right or authority, is a worldwide phenomenon. It has not spared Mauritius and it has long been referred to in the Mauritian laws.

429. In the pre-independence era, when land was abundant and easily available, the problem of squatting was virtually non-existent. Even the law with regard to squatters was very lenient at that time. There were hardly any evictions as procedures were very slow and in most cases the land was finally granted to the squatter.

430. However with the post-independence development of the country - demographic, social, economic and industrial - the demand for land grew considerably. The scarcity and high prices of land, coupled with low income, resulted in a rise in the number of squatters. Although the law was amended in 1986 to give the Government more powers for the eviction of squatters on State land, the sanctions for squatting were still so lenient that they could not provide a sufficient deterrent.

431. A survey carried out in five districts of the island in late 1991 showed some 1,298 squatters on State land. Conscious of the fact that the problem of squatting involves social and human issues, the Government decided to regularize the situation of those 1,298 squatters, who had been living on State lands for many years. Of late, some 600 old cases have been identified in the four remaining districts and the Government is proposing to regularize their situation also, on humanitarian grounds. Furthermore, 1,340 building site leases have been granted to very low-income people to allow them incrementally to build their own dwellings.

432. However, in order to discourage the proliferation of squatting on State lands, the Government had to amend the law in December 1991. The State Lands (Amendment) Act 1991 provides a stronger deterrent to squatting - three years' imprisonment. This has definitively led to a decrease in the rate of squatting. But there still exists pressure for land for residential purposes. Since the introduction of the new legislation only 400 persistent cases have been recorded throughout the island. It is worth noting that these new cases have been prompted not by economic reasons but as a result of the scarcity of land.

433. It is worthwhile observing also that squatting in Mauritius does not have the dimensions obtaining in Asian or African countries. No single case of squatting on private land exists and at any one time squatter households have never exceeded 1 per cent of the total number of households.

434. Finally, in view of government efforts in providing housing for the low-income group, either through subsidized, completely built units or through the allocation of building sites to the more needy, the Government holds the view that squatting on State lands is not justified and there should be no reason for squatting.

435. In the light of the above, the Committee's observations relating to the discontinuation of the Government's programme of low-cost housing in Mauritius are not founded. The restricted role of the CHA in providing low-cost permanent housing after cyclones is now encompassed in the wider role of the NHDC, which implements the National Housing Programme which includes low-income housing. Prompt measures have been taken by the Government through the Ministry of Works after cyclone Hollanda to put up temporary shelters for about 100 cyclone victims and to facilitate the allocation of NHDC housing units to eligible victims.

8. Health care (art. 12)

"[T]he Committee notes the deplorable state of mental health care in Mauritius. It is also concerned about information according to which half of the maternal deaths since 1982 have been due to complications following abortion, which is prohibited by law."

436. The Committee's concerns have already been addressed in the present report under article 12 (see paras. 287 and 306-308 above).

9. Flaws in the educational system (art. 13)

"[The Committee] notes that the Mauritian school system is extremely competitive, which leads to widespread, government-encouraged and costly private tuition and thus renders access to secondary and tertiary education more difficult for the poorer segments of the population. The Committee is also concerned about the reintroduction of fees at the tertiary level of education ... The Committee further notes that Creol and Bhojpuri, the only languages spoken by the large majority of the population, are not used in the Mauritian educational system."

437. The Committee's concerns have been addressed in the response under article 13.

438. It may also be noted that the Education Regulations of 1957 include the following provision (para. 43) with respect to the medium of instruction and the teaching of languages:

"In the lower classes of Government and aided primary schools up to and including Standard III, any one language may be employed as the medium of instruction, being a language which in the opinion of the Minister is most suitable for the pupils."

10. Use of Creol and Bhojpuri (art. 15)

"[T]he Committee is concerned that the use of the main languages spoken by 92 per cent of the population, namely Creol and Bhojpuri, is banned in the Mauritian National Assembly ..."

439. As a result of its historical evolution, Mauritius has a multicultural, multireligious population with a wide diversity of languages. There are several languages which form part of the Mauritian linguistic heritage, namely English, French, Hindi, Modern Chinese, Urdu, Arabic, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi,

among others. These languages are taught in schools and promoted through radio and television. English is the official language of the country, while the use of French is also allowed in the National Assembly. It has been the stated policy of the Government to foster all the languages and cultures equally, within the overall concept of unity in diversity, which is founded on mutual understanding and respect. It is clear that there has never been any deliberate policy or action to discourage any of the languages.

11. Rodrigues

"The Committee is also concerned that the population of the island of Rodrigues enjoys the right to health and the right to education to a markedly lesser degree than the people on the island of Mauritius itself."

440. Rodrigues is part of the Republic of Mauritius, but is a separate island situated about 560 km from the main land. It has an area of 104 km and a population of over 34,000 inhabitants. It has specific geographical, social, economic and cultural features. Educational and health services are available in Rodrigues and, as will be noted, they are comparable to that of Mauritius.

Educational services

441. Preprimary education is available to about 70 per cent of children aged 3 to 5. Eighty-five per cent of children of school age have access to primary education. Enrolment at Preprimary and primary level rested with parents until the introduction of compulsory education in 1991.

442. Every child or student of age has the right to free primary/secondary and tertiary education. All facilities are available to pupils, students and teachers.

443. The best primary and secondary school students have access to scholarships which are especially reserved for Rodriguans.

444. Existing educational facilities available on the island are:

(i) The Education Centre, which is fully equipped to service the education sector;

(ii) 37 preprimary schools (1,154 children)

(iii) 12 primary schools (population 5,272)

(iv) One pre-vocational training centre (169 pupils)

(v) One technical school (75 students)

(vi) Three secondary schools - (2,430 students)

(vii) One university antenna for short-term courses.

445. There are currently six students from Rodrigues following courses at the University of Mauritius.

446. Scholarships awarded by foreign countries are as follows:

One scholarship under President's Award tenable at the University of Mauritius - 1993;

Two French scholarships each year;

One scholarship from India under the India Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowships Plan, 1994;

Two scholarships from Australia under the Australian Development Cooperation Scholarship Programme, 1995.

447. As indicated above, there is also a university antenna in Rodrigues run by the Faculty of Law and Management of the University of Mauritius for courses leading to the Certificate in Public Administration and Management and successful candidates are made to come to Mauritius to follow courses of degree level at the University of Mauritius.

Health services

448. In Rodrigues, a comprehensive system of primary health care has been established like in Mauritius and the Regional Hospital is being continuously upgraded by provision of up-to-date equipment and specialist services. The health authorities are in the process of recruiting a paediatrician under contract from outside the service.

449. There are three hospitals with a total capacity of 169 beds. There are also 11 community health centres which service the whole scattered population. Medical services are available at Mt. Lubin Area Health Centre on a 24-hour basis. A medical officer is posted on a roster basis to provide 24-hour medical coverage.

450. The number of doctors in post is 10, including 3 specialists - one in surgery, one in gynaecology and one in general medicine. There are also 2 dental surgeons. The health personnel consists of 82 nurses including midwives, 3 laboratory technicians, 2 radiographers, 4 dispensers and 9 family-planning staff. Action has also been taken for the creation of the following posts in the Rodrigues health service: 1 health director, 1 hospital administrator, 1 senior steward, 1 community physician.

451. All facilities are available for the treatment of major and minor ailments. However, any patient requiring emergency treatment not available in Rodrigues is transferred by air to Mauritius at the cost of the State. Ear, nose and throat, ophthalmic, orthopaedic and cardiology specialists are regularly sent on short-term missions to Rodrigues.

452. The following equipment is available at the central hospital: ECO facilities, cardiac monitor, defibrillators and ventilators. An echographic machine is soon to be installed.

453. The following indicators for 1993 show the health situation:

Infant mortality	21
Maternal mortality	0
Perinatal mortality	15
Still births	6
Vaccination coverage	90 per cent
Family planning coverage	75 per cent